

**OZO-MEKURI NDIMELE (Ed.)**

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# **NIGERIA LANGUAGES, LITERATURES, CULTURE & REFORMS**

*A Festschrift for Ayo Bamgbose*



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# **Nigerian Languages, Literatures, Cultures & Reforms**

*Festschrift for Ayo Bamgbose*

**Ozo-mekuri Ndimele (Ed.)**

*Professor of Comparative Grammar*

Dept. of Linguistics & Communication Studies

University of Port Harcourt, **Nigeria**

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## **Dedication**

*This book is dedicated to Past Presidents of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria:*

**Mr. Isaac Madugu**  
**Prof. E. Nolue Emenanjo**  
**Prof. Okon Essien**  
**Prof. Alex Iwara**





## Preface

**T**he Linguistic Association of Nigeria (LAN) celebrated her Silver Jubilee on 14 November, 2006, at the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), Abuja. At the Annual General Meeting of LAN, it was unanimously decided that some of the good papers that were read at the Conference to mark the Silver Jubilee of LAN be published in the Festschrift Series to honour the FATHER OF NIGERIAN LINGUISTICS, Professor Emeritus Ayo Bamgbose. This was a wise decision, and as a matter of fact, no other Nigerian linguist (living or dead) would have qualified to be so honoured.

Professor Emeritus Bamgbose means a lot to us as far as the growth of Nigerian linguistics is concerned. He was the first indigenous Professor of Linguistics in Nigeria, and the first black African to teach linguistics in any known university south of the Sahara. He was there from the very beginning, and with the co-operation of the likes of the Late Professor Kay Williamson, Professor Emeritus Bamgbose nurtured Nigerian linguistics. He is not just a foremost Nigerian linguist, but also a most famous, respected, distinguished, and cherished African linguist of all times, to say the least. Mention any Head of Linguistics or the most senior professor in the Department of Linguistics in any Nigerian university, and I can confidently tell you who was his/her teacher or teacher's teacher – Professor Emeritus Bamgbose of course. The likes of Professors E. Nolue Emenanjo, Ben Elugbe, P.A. Nwachukwu, Akin. Akinlabi, Francis Igbokhare, Shirley Yul-Ifode, Eno-Abasi Urua, etc., were his former students. All these are big names in African linguistics.

To be candid, Nigerian linguistics is synonymous with Professor Emeritus Bamgbose. How we wished we had more to give him just to show how we admire and appreciate him for all he has done to raise the level of study in Nigerian languages and linguistics both in teaching and in research. LAN wishes him well.

In 58 well-written chapters by experts in their fields, the book covers aspects of Nigerian languages, linguistics, literatures and culture. Frankly, we have not succeeded in putting the papers meticulously into their natural sections; hence, one finds some overlapping in the way the papers are arranged. It is not, however, uncommon with books of this nature.

The book is a must read for all who are interested to learn about current trends in the study of languages, linguistics and related subject-matters in Nigeria.

This project would have failed completely without the support of a number of individuals and organisations. We sincerely acknowledge the support from members of the Local Organisation Committee for the Silver Jubilee and the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of LAN. The efforts of Dr. (Mrs.) A.U. Okwudishu and Femi Ibrahim were particularly outstanding. We also appreciate the material donations from the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Abuja and the Executive Secretary of NERDC, Professor Obioma Godswill, towards the hosting of the Silver Jubilee.

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The members of my Executive: Dr. A.H. Amfani (Vice-President), Dr. Imelda Udoh (Secretary), Dr. Harrison Adeniyi (Treasurer) and Professor Eno-Abasi Urua (*JOLAN* Editor) deserve no less appreciation for their encouragement.

**Professor Ozo-mekuri Ndimele**

*Founding Editor &*

*National President, Linguistic Association of Nigeria.*

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# **1. Linguistics & Social Responsibility: The Challenge for the Nigerian Linguist\***

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**Ayo Bamgbose**

*Emeritus Professor of Linguistics, University of Ibadan*

## **Introduction**

On this occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference and the Silver Jubilee of the founding of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria (LAN), it gives me great pleasure to congratulate all linguists in Nigeria on the great strides we have taken in linguistic teaching and research in the past twenty-five years. When I joined the staff of the then Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages (now Department of Linguistics and African Languages) in October 1963 as a young lecturer, Ibadan was the only Department of Linguistics and I was the only Nigerian linguist on the staff. By the time LAN was founded, a few more Departments of Linguistics notably at Nsukka, Ife, Ilorin, Jos and Port Harcourt had been added to Ibadan, and many more linguists holding Ph.D degrees had arrived on the scene.

From the very beginning of the teaching of linguistics in Nigeria, the emphasis had been on the descriptive and theoretical aspects of the discipline, with phonetics and phonology looming large, closely followed by comparative/historical linguistics, with grammar (morphology, syntax and semantics) taking the rear as a distant third. In this early period, sociolinguistics was practically unknown, and much of what passed for syntax was superficial. Several reasons are responsible for this. First, the Department of Linguistics at Ibadan grew out of a Sub-Department of Phonetics, and so the tradition of description of the mechanism of speech production and speech sounds lingered on. Second, most expatriate linguists were more at home with phonetics and phonology, and third, the prevailing preoccupations of the time with phonemics, morphology, structural grammar, comparative studies tended to be reflected in the course offerings, which in turn, generally reflected the interest and specialization of the teachers.

In view of the practical theme of this Keynote Address, I hasten to draw attention to the fact that theoretical studies particularly in the core areas of linguistics are indeed vitally important. Two factors have led me to re-emphasize the importance of theoretical studies. First, in the Survey of Language Use and Language Teaching in Eastern Africa (SLULTEA) 1967-1980, African linguists played only a supporting role relating to gathering of data on language use in education, while expatriate linguists dealt with core linguistic analysis. Second, there is a growing tendency, particularly among newer postgraduate students, to wish to avoid research in the core areas, particularly syntax. Some students opt for research on sociolinguistic topics because they believe that such topics constitute a soft option. I never hesitate to tell such students that the best sociolinguists in the world are also very good in the core areas of linguistics. How, for instance, could William Labov have done such outstanding work on linguistic variables and their implications if he was not very competent in phonetics, phonology and syntax?



In my inaugural lecture of 27<sup>th</sup> October 1972, I referred to the humorous comment made by a European colleague about the need for professionalism. He said, "If there is a conference of obstetricians, you don't invite pregnant women, even though they are the ones most concerned with the topics for discussion!" The implication of this comment in our context is that speakers of African languages quite rightly cannot participate in a linguistic conference simply by virtue of the fact that they speak these languages. Hence, I added my own commentary on the comment that "Africans in linguistics cannot afford to be pregnant women in a gathering of obstetricians. They have to be thoroughly professional and this means sound theoretical orientation" (Bamgbose 1973).

The postgraduate programme in Ibadan benefited from the early emphasis on the formal aspects of linguistics, as did indeed the research carried out by the staff. The growth in research is also amply illustrated by the statistics of Ph.D theses produced. For example, from the establishment of the Department in 1962 to 1972, only 2 Ph.D theses were produced in the Department. However, from 1973 to 1979, 7 theses were completed. In the decade of 1980 to 1989, 10 theses were recorded, while another 7 were completed in the seven years from 1990 to 1996. (University of Ibadan 1973; Olayinka and Taiwo 2003, 2004). Apart from increasing numbers, what is of interest is the distribution in terms of topics. The breakdown of the total of 26 theses produced in the period in terms of areas of specialization is as follows: Phonology 3, Syntax 7, Comparative/Historical Linguistics 3, Contrastive Linguistics 1, Sociolinguistics 1, Yoruba Literature & Stylistics 9, and Igbo Literature & Stylistics 2. Not only does formal analysis predominate in these theses, even the theses in literature and stylistics have a strong theoretical orientation. The same trends may be observed in the sections on language compiled in Bibliographies such as Aboyade (1978) *Nigerian Contributions to Humanistic Studies* and Adewole (1987) *The Yoruba Language: Published Works and Doctoral Dissertations 1843-1986*.

If one were to assess the contribution of Nigerian linguists in the core areas of linguistics, one can truthfully say that they have done very well, in spite of constraints of funding for research, access to journals and books, and publication outlets (Bamgbose 1995:12). Commenting in an earlier paper on the range of topics in contributions to the *Journal of West African Languages* in the last few years, I said,

Not only are the approaches more sophisticated, studies of phonetic data are more

... instrumental and measurement-oriented; there is greater attention to the neglected area of syntax and semantics and models such as Government and Binding and minimalist program are represented as well as the more conservative accounts of development of syntactic categories. Aspects of discourse analysis can also be found. Of course, the ubiquitous tonal analysis remains very much in vogue, but now more geared to autosegmental approach. Fewer articles appear on genetic classification, the few being more elaborate and not restricted to lexical comparison only. Wordlists now feature in an appendix, where they properly belong (Bamgbose 2000/2001:115).

On the occasion of this Silver Jubilee of the founding of LAN, Nigerian linguists can award themselves a creditable pass mark in their efforts at language description at virtually all linguistic levels.

### **The Linguist and Social Responsibility**

One theme I drew attention to years ago and which I have returned to repeatedly in the last few years is social responsibility (SR) of the linguist. My first reference to this theme was in my inaugural lecture of 1972. Examining the practical problems and challenges faced by a linguist in a developing country, I declared (and please excuse the lack of gender sensitivity typical of the writing of the time):

A linguist in a developing country cannot afford to be a 'pure' linguist. He must

... be prepared to 'dirty his hands' (if need be) if and when he is called upon to assist with such things as the problems of language teaching, devising orthographies, writing textbooks, or even primers. It is only in this way that he can show that he is genuinely concerned with the problems of the society in which he lives and works (Bamgbose 1973:17).

In retrospect, what I advocated then was rather limited as it was mainly about applied language research and language material. In subsequent elaborations of this theme, I expanded the scope of SR of the linguist to include societal and educational concerns and, in particular, the language policy dimension:

Linguists are often content to collect data, carry out analysis of the data collected

... and publish for the attention of their colleagues. What is missing in all this is the social relevance of what we do. For linguistics to be socially relevant, we must go beyond mere scholarly descriptions and consider the practical application of our work in terms of orthography, literacy, use of language in education, language development, and language policy... Every one of us must be a sociolinguist at heart (in addition to whatever else we may be by training) (Bamgbose 2000/2001:116).

Further, but this time focusing specifically on the educational failure engendered by inappropriate language policy, particularly in relation to English as a medium of instruction, I declared:

Far too often, we publish for the attention of our colleagues and to advance

... knowledge but do not care about the fate of English in our schools. In many countries of the Outer Circle, a constant complaint is that the standard of English is falling and our research does not have any bearing on such a question (Bamgbose 2001:361).

Then drawing on statistics of performance in the School Certificate Examination, which indicate an average failure rate of about 64.3% per year between 1995 and 1999, I posed the question:

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Faced with such a dismal picture, how can a World Englishes researcher in Nigeria feel comfortable with academic or theoretical study of his or her subject and not be seriously concerned with the fate of thousands of students who fall by the wayside simply because of English, which is a compulsory subject? Something has to be done to combat declining standards of English and it is part of the social responsibility of scholars of world Englishes in Nigeria (and elsewhere where this problem occurs) to contribute to the quest for a solution (Bamgbose 2001:361)

SR by the linguist for his or her community has a parallel in the well-known code of *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR), which enjoins corporate bodies to be aware of their responsibility to their clients, their employees and the community in which they operate. For example, oil companies in the Niger Delta are constantly being reminded that they cannot simply drill wells and pump crude oil from them without doing something to alleviate the physical degradation attendant on their activities. What is true of multinational and other companies is also true of governments. It is part of the social contract between the government and the people that basic amenities such as education, health, water, shelter and electricity be provided. I was the more strengthened in my conviction about social responsibility by linguists when, as part of the activities to mark Wole Soyinka's 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday, I was invited to give a lecture on the topic "Towards a Culture of Social Responsibility" (Bamgbose 2005a). CSR for companies and governments is simply the counterpart of SR for the linguist. Linguists are enjoined to contribute to the linguistic welfare of the communities among whom they work, in much the same way as companies and governments are enjoined to take CSR seriously.

### **Dimensions of Social Responsibility in Linguistics**

There are many areas in which a linguist may be called upon to exercise his or her social responsibility to the community and the nation. However, for the purpose of this Keynote Address, I wish to focus on eight domains along which linguists may be expected to exercise SR: Language corpus, language policy, education, justice, health, rural development, politics and information.

#### **(a) Social Responsibility and Language Corpus**

Several activities fall into the scope of language corpus. These include orthography, school texts, data collection, work on endangered languages, terminology, translation, and literature.

In much of the research we do, we often have to deal with languages that have not been written at all. Hence, it is not enough to do an elegant phonology without paying some attention to practical orthography, so that speakers of the language can write and read in it. Even when a language has been written, it is possible that the orthography is inadequate, in which case there will be need for orthographic reform. Where several related languages are concerned, there may be further need for harmonization.

One sure way of valorization of any language is intergenerational transmission. This means not only getting young people to speak and write the language, it also means making available school texts, including primers, readers

and manuals, both for pupils and teachers. This sort of work is usually left to low-level personnel, such as school teachers, since it is not considered prestigious.

Most linguists collect data, but mainly for the purposes of analysis and exemplification of theoretical concepts. Data collection, such as folktales, oral tradition and legends of origin, intended to preserve the literary treasures in a language is something many linguists will consider as outside their immediate concern or something for folklorists and literary scholars.

That there are many languages in Africa, which are endangered, is an established fact (Brenzinger ed. 1998; Batibo 2005). Many linguists pay lip service to the need to prevent endangered languages from dying, but without really doing much about it. In my view, saving endangered languages from extinction goes beyond merely finding the proverbial last surviving speaker and recoding her last sound, which happens to be a glottal stop! It involves arousing interest in speakers of the language to take pride in their language and a desire to preserve it by getting the younger generation to use it. How many linguists have the time to engage in such non-academic concerns?

For languages to be used in a wider range of domains, there is need for vocabulary expansion. Fortunately, this activity is not considered unacademic, as it has been done not only for technical vocabulary for teaching in schools as well as metalanguage for teaching languages at university level. Besides, the strategies for vocabulary expansion can also be discussed in a theoretical manner (Bamgbose 1987; Owolabi 2006). In spite of this, it is doubtful if work of this type will be placed at par with conventional descriptive or theoretical papers in linguistics.

Translation of classics in European languages into African languages and from one African language into another is an activity, which is essential, if African languages are to share in the world patrimony of knowledge. It is doubtful if many linguists consider that this is an essential concern in their research. In all probability, they see this as work to be done by others. In any case, how much academic credit is given to practical translations as opposed to a theoretical discussion of the concepts and mechanism of translation?

In the normal course of events, literature should go hand in hand with language, for what is literature but a creative use of language? However, such is the partitioning of disciplines that a language person may not only consider himself or herself incompetent to handle literature, but worse still, may develop negative attitudes towards it. Even in a department of Linguistics where both language and literature co-exist, it will be interesting to know how much interaction there is between linguists and literary scholars.

It should be clear from some of the comments made on several components of language corpus that, in general, language corpus work is not a popular concern for linguists. There are four reasons why this is so. First, there is the hangover about the core areas of linguistics, which many perceive as the most prestigious kind of linguistics, and anyone doing something else, is considered as perhaps less gifted or inferior. Second, there is negative evaluation of such work not only among linguists themselves, but by outsiders who are more easily impressed by the pseudo-scientific jargon and formalism of phonology and syntax. Third, corpus-related work is not likely to get published in prestigious journals, and fourth, arising from the third reason, most academics, who publish with promotion

in view, are likely to avoid working or writing on topics, which cannot ensure speedy promotion.

Unpleasant as it may seem, Nigerian linguists can only record an average, or even failing, performance as far as SR in language corpus is concerned. Yet the reality of our situation in Africa is that, without such work, our languages cannot be empowered for use as languages of instruction in education as well as working languages in other domains of national life. The lesson for us is to find a way to rehabilitate such work, even if means engaging in it as part of community-inspired language promotion.

### **(b) Social Responsibility and Language Policy**

A major preoccupation in language planning in developing countries is a decision on language status. In a multilingual situation, there is need to decide which language is to be used for what purpose. This includes official language, national language, working languages in government institutions, including the legislature, and the language of education. With the exception of the language of education, which has been the subject of critical examination, much of the discussion on language status has remained either at a theoretical level or at the popular level, with some contributors to the debate making sometimes frivolous proposals such as devising a neutral artificial language, which is expected to be a composite of several Nigerian languages or choosing a little-known language so as to put most of the population at equal disadvantage or opting for a non-Nigerian but widely spoken African language, such as Kiswahili.

In all this, Nigerian linguists, true to their Western orientation of objectivity and detachment, are content with examining options, without pushing any particular solutions. It is an aspect of SR in language policy that the Nigerian linguist should discard pseudo-detachment and false objectivity and engage actively in advocacy. A good example of this is what Professor Kola Owolabi and his collaborators are doing with the language of debate in Houses of Assembly in the South West. Noting that the Constitution provides for the use of a major language of a State for debates in the House, he goes beyond analytic procedures of how legislative terms can be evolved to actual advocacy of the use of Yoruba in the South Western Houses of Assembly. From limited use of Yoruba for general discussion on Wednesdays in Ogun State, much progress has been recorded in Oyo State, where there is a lot of interest in the implementation of the policy. It is reported that other States in the zone are already striving hard not to be left behind in this progressive policy. This success would not have been achieved if Professor Owolabi had limited himself to writing papers and expounding his ideas only in the classroom. We all need to take seriously advocacy as an aspect of SR in linguistics.

SR can be exercised by individual linguists or a body of linguists, such as LAN. In this connection, I wish to draw attention to the stand taken by the Linguistic Society of America (LSA) in relation to the English-only litigation in the US. In October 1995, a suit was argued in the US Supreme Court in which a group of citizens from Arizona advocating English as the only official and working language in the State were petitioners, while the State of Arizona and citizens opposed to the policy were respondents. The LSA felt so strongly about the litigation that it hired seasoned advocates to present a case as *amicus curiae* in



support of the respondents. So thorough was the Brief that it cited not only legal but also linguistic authorities in support of its position that other languages should be allowed to coexist with English so as to prevent the incidence of exclusion. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that my book, Bamgbose (1991) *Language and the Nation*, was one of the authorities cited in the Brief! (LSA 1995).

By sheer coincidence, this Conference is taking place at a time when the National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN) is under threat of being scrapped. If there is any issue for which we should exercise our SR and proclaim our opposition to the misguided policy of the government in this matter, this certainly is it! The reasons for setting up NINLAN are by now well known. Specifically,

- *The National Policy on Education* 1977, 1981 makes provision for a multilingual policy involving learning of a child's L1 or LIC as well as one of the three major languages.
- In carrying out this policy, it is realized that there is a severe shortage of teachers as illustrated by the *Report of the Technical Committee on Production of Teachers for the Three Major Languages*, 1988. This Committee found that, with the existing secondary school classes as of that date, 55,237 teachers were needed in secondary schools, and, of this number, only 6,383 teachers were available, made up of Hausa (1,678), Igbo (1,117) and Yoruba (3,588). The shortfall of 48,858 is distributed as follows: Hausa (16,313), Igbo (18,211) and Yoruba (14,330).
- Existing sources of production of teachers of Nigerian languages, such as Universities and Colleges of Education, are subject to such constraints as limitation on admission through quota, orientation towards L1 (L2 programmes are only vigorously promoted in Colleges of Education). Consequently, only a limited number of qualified teachers are available. It, therefore, requires the sort of intervention envisaged by NINLAN to turn out teachers of Nigerian languages in the numbers required.
- Arising from inadequate supply of teachers, the requirement of a pass in a major Nigerian language for certification at Senior Secondary School is usually violated in most schools, and waivers are routinely given from year to year to enable students to graduate.

These reasons are as valid today as when NINLAN was established in 1992 and there is no justification at all for scrapping it. Incidentally, since NINLAN was validly established by law, one would expect any lawful change in its status to be effected by a bill presented to the National Assembly. The necessary hearing on such a bill would have afforded stakeholders, like LAN and other interested persons, to present reasoned arguments against its dissolution.

One irony in the NINLAN situation is that the Year 2006, being the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the adoption of the Language Plan of Action for Africa, has been declared by the African Union (AU) as the **Year of African Languages**, for which a series of activities are envisaged to renew commitment to the Plan, ensure high visibility for it, and carry out practical steps to increase the use of African languages in a wider range of domains, particularly education. The AU Khartoum

Summit of African Heads of State of January 2006, at which this decision was taken was chaired by no less a person than the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Olusegun Obasanjo, who apparently has given a stamp of approval to the scrapping of NINLAN. How can Nigeria afford to take one position at the continental level and then turn round to maintain a contradictory one at the national level?

### **(c) Social Responsibility and Education**

Although in the discussion of SR in language policy, certain aspects of educational policy have been mentioned, the most crucial aspect of SR in education concerns the language of instruction and its effect on educational attainment. Notwithstanding policy provisions for the use of a child's first language as a medium of instruction, at least in lower primary classes, the prevailing policy and expectation are that such a medium should yield to English from upper primary classes up to the highest levels of education. Irrespective of what the teacher does in his or her class (for example, using a child's mother tongue to explain naughty problems or even using it to teach some subjects contrary to laid-down policy), the assumption is that English is the language of instruction. Examinations are in English for all subjects (with the exception of language subjects other than English).

If English as a medium produced the best results and children were able to master it as well as other subjects taught through it very well, there would not have been any need to express any concern. The reality, of course, is that at virtually all levels of education, performance in English is inadequate and this continues to affect acquisition of knowledge in other subjects. Take, for instance, performance in the Secondary School Certificate Examination. Statistics collected for the years 1995 to 1999 (See Table 1) show not only a massive failure in English, they also show declining performance in the five years. Since at least a Credit in English is required for admission to universities, colleges and polytechnics, only an average of about 9.7% of all students per year may be said to have done well in English to merit admission. The rest either have an ordinary pass or an outright fail. Failure rate is an average of about 64.3% every year and, allowing for incomplete or unavailable results in 1998 and 1999, the failure rate appears to get worse from year to year.

**TABLE 1**

*Secondary School Certificate Examination in Nigeria Performance in English in Percentages*

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Credit &amp; above</i> | <i>Ordinary Pass</i> | <i>Fail</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|-------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1995        | 12.4                      | 27.7                 | 59.9        | 100          |
| 1996        | 11.33                     | 24.03                | 64.62       | 99.98        |
| 1997        | 6.54                      | 26.77                | 66.67       | 99.98        |
| 1998        | 8.47                      | 21.49                | 65.53       | 95.49        |
| 1999        | 9.71                      | 22.59                | 64.91       | 97.21        |

(Source: West African Examinations Council, 1997; 1999)



Given that English is the medium of instruction for other subjects, it is not surprising as shown in Table 2 that performance in other subjects is almost equally as bad. In the years 1997-1999, examination results in six subjects drawn from the physical and biological sciences, social sciences and humanities are selected for comparison with corresponding results in English in Table 1. The subjects (in alphabetic order) are Biology, Economics, Geography, Literature-in-English, Mathematics, and Physics.

These are popular subjects in the combination offered by most candidates, most of them being core subjects. The similarity with the results in English in Table 1 is the high failure rate, the highest being 73% in Geography and 71.15% in Literature-in-English in the 1997 examination. Further evidence of the correlation between performance in English and in the other subjects is shown by the 1997 results. Performance in English is the poorest in that year and this is matched by the lowest credit rate and the highest failure rate in all the other subjects in the same year (Bamgbose 2005b).

As linguists concerned with the social and educational dimensions of language, what should be our reaction to this massive educational failure? Should we, like an official, who shall remain nameless, ostrich-like seek refuge in the excuse that it is due to an “overloaded curriculum” or should we rather call a spade a spade and put the blame where it truly belongs, i.e. that lack of competence in English affects performance in all subjects taught through the medium of English?

**TABLE 2**

*Secondary School Certificate Examination in Nigeria Performance in Subjects other than English in Percentages*

| <i>Subject</i> | <i>Year</i> | <i>Credit+</i> | <i>Pass</i> | <i>Fail</i> |
|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| Biology        | 1997        | 15.79          | 23.32       | 60.88       |
|                | 1998        | 34.44          | 25.33       | 38.85       |
|                | 1999        | 27.81          | 27.40       | 41.97       |
| Economics      | 1997        | 14.04          | 27.64       | 58.30       |
|                | 1998        | 22.09          | 29.56       | 46.83       |
|                | 1999        | 21.66          | 34.14       | 41.43       |
| Geography      | 1997        | 11.61          | 15.37       | 73.00       |
|                | 1998        | 16.19          | 21.63       | 59.30       |
|                | 1999        | 11.75          | 28.72       | 56.79       |
| Lit-in-Eng     | 1997        | 09.02          | 19.82       | 71.15       |
|                | 1998        | 14.56          | 27.16       | 53.82       |
|                | 1999        | 09.40          | 21.62       | 64.99       |
| Maths          | 1997        | 07.65          | 26.18       | 66.16       |
|                | 1998        | 11.40          | 25.01       | 61.50       |
|                | 1999        | 18.25          | 28.08       | 50.35       |
| Physics        | 1997        | 09.35          | 31.87       | 58.78       |
|                | 1998        | 11.33          | 32.02       | 55.19       |
|                | 1999        | 30.57          | 29.37       | 36.95       |

Key: ‘Credit +’ represents Grades from ‘Credit’ to ‘Distinction’.  
(Source: West African Examinations Council, 1997; 1999)

As university teachers, we are also at the receiving end of poor mastery of English. Poor essays with jumbled syntax and incomprehensible ideas are more often than not encountered in the course of our work. Hence, we insist on 'Use of English' as a compulsory course in the General Studies Programme. Shouldn't we go further to the root cause of the problem, seeing that what we see at university level is a product of teaching at secondary level? It is also pretty certain that teachers at secondary level will also blame those at primary level for their predicament. What all this points to is the need to reappraise our language of instruction policy. There is no reason why Nigerian languages should be confined to lower primary classes as medium of instruction. Given the necessary language development effort and the incentive, many of our languages can function effectively as languages of learning and teaching, with the expected outcome that students will feel more at home with the subject matter they are confronted with and consequently learn better.

Another aspect of education, which should be of concern to linguists, is the high degree of illiteracy in Nigeria as well as in other African countries. The conventional approach to eradication of illiteracy is the organization of literacy classes as an aspect of non-formal education and also large-scale mass literacy programmes. Both activities have been tried in this country with varying degrees of success. A close examination of the planning of mass literacy programmes shows scant regard for the language to be used for literacy. While it is generally agreed that a language that the illiterate adult already knows well is the best medium for literacy, it is surprising that the language medium is rarely explicitly stated nor are instructors trained with language in mind. Rather, there is heavy reliance on adult education experts, who are more at home with methodology and organization than with language. I believe that linguists have a crucial role to play in literacy, not only by supplying authentic language material but also in the grading and phasing of course books. Above all, SR in education demands that we should be concerned with the realities of the high incidence of illiteracy not only in Nigeria but in Africa in general, knowing that the implication of illiteracy for a country is stunted growth and development.

#### **(d) Social Responsibility and Justice**

It is a notorious fact that the inherited system of justice in Nigeria works hardship on the uneducated and the poor. With the exception of the lower customary courts where proceedings are conducted in the language of the area, proceedings in Western-type courts from the Magistrates' courts to the higher courts are conducted in English, with lawyers trained in English legal jurisprudence appearing for litigants. Those who are not literate in English are at a distinct disadvantage. For criminal cases in Nigeria, the Constitution provides for an interpreter to be made available at no cost to the person charged with an offence. This is, however, of little comfort as there have been cases where poor quality of interpreting has been prejudicial to the case of an accused person. In this connection, it is comical to observe a judge who speaks the same language as an accused listening impassively to the evidence in a shared language and making his or her notes from the interpretation into English by the interpreter. Occasionally, when the judge notes an improper interpretation, he or she interrupts the interpreter to point out the error. The only reason the judge is not allowed to

address the accused in the shared language is that the official language of the judiciary is English. Laws are framed and interpreted in English and most accused persons, including those literate in English but are unfamiliar with the register of legal language, are at a disadvantage. In civil matters, there is no compulsion that interpreters be provided. Hence a litigant who cannot speak English will have to make alternative arrangements for his or her evidence to be heard.

The issue raised in the use of an unfamiliar language in the judicial process is that of language rights, which are an aspect of human rights. As linguists, we should be concerned with the miscarriage of justice, which occurs when a litigant's case is not properly presented on account of incorrect interpretation or indirect evidence through a third party. One cannot but agree with Ansre (1976) when he declares, "When justice is carried out in a language which the majority does not and in all likelihood cannot control well in the near future, there is bound to be miscarriages of justice". Civil Society Organizations are well known for their work on human rights. Linguists can complement such work by focusing on linguistic human rights and insisting on a more liberal use of the language that a person is competent in, particularly where the use of such a language is crucial to fair hearing, equity and justice. As linguists, this should be the concomitant of our concern for SR in the judicial process.

#### **(e) Social Responsibility in Health**

In the health sector, a major constraint to good health is ignorance. Many people suffer from ailments, which could have been avoided given adequate information. Hence, a crucial aspect of preventive measures in health is dissemination of accurate information on causes of diseases, elementary precautions, and how and where to seek help at the onset of an ailment. Although much is now being done in using Nigerian languages in health campaigns, a lot more could still be done. That is why it is heartening to note that LAN has demonstrated a sense of SR in health by including among the sub-themes to be discussed at this Conference, "Nigerian Languages and the Fight Against HIV/AIDS". In spite of massive propaganda by the National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA), it is not surprising that there is still a great deal of ignorance on the disease, ranging from outright denial of its existence to serious misconceptions about how it is acquired and transmitted. It is an aspect of SR for us as linguists to be involved in strategies for the extensive use of Nigerian languages for dissemination of information on this scourge. Far from limiting the campaign to the major languages nationally and the main languages at the State level, we should help in extending the dissemination of information to as many Nigerian languages as possible and even go further to include, where necessary, dialects of some languages.

Closely related to the health concern is poverty. In fact, poverty and poor health often go hand-in-hand. Unless there is empowerment for the poor in terms of meaningful and gainful employment, work by the agencies set up to foster poverty alleviation will be futile. Where does language come in here? Information on the programmes should not only be in the languages that people understand, the various projects offered to alleviate poverty should be capable of being pursued through the medium of our indigenous languages. Existing practices in crafts, trade, agriculture, local industries, etc. should be the basis of poverty alleviation intervention rather than super-imposed Western oriented practices, which

inevitably have to be transmitted in English. Our SR as linguists is to make the realization of this objective feasible.

**(f) Social Responsibility and Rural Development**

One of the cornerstones of development, particularly in a developing country like Nigeria, is rural development. This is seen as a way of involving the rural populace in grassroots development, enhancing their standard of living, and spreading the benefits of economic opportunities to rural areas, thereby combating the undesirable effects of rural-urban migration. Extension workers sent to rural areas to advise on agriculture and economic activities are generally trained in English, even though they have to operate in areas where the usual means of communication and economic activities are Nigerian languages. It is the responsibility of linguists to point out that rural development without the use of the languages that people normally operate in is sheer waste of time and effort. In a study conducted in the Cameroon, Robinson (1996) has demonstrated how organization and communication in local languages have enhanced the effectiveness of both extension workers and the rural populace, giving rise to maximum participation and collaborative effort and resulting in greater interest and productivity.

**(g) Social Responsibility and Political System**

The bedrock of any democratic system of government is participation. What impedes participation in Nigeria as well as in other African countries is lack of access to necessary information on which meaningful choices can be made. By and large, the political system is dominated by the educated elite, who get elected to the legislature, while the masses, like soccer fans, play the supporting role of cheering their teams and trooping to polling booths to act as voting fodder. To ensure mass participation, the use of Nigerian languages is inevitable. The domains in which such use is particularly important include proceedings at the local level, political campaigns, party manifestos, debate in legislative houses, and above all the Constitution. Some efforts are already being made in some of these areas. For example, some Houses of Assembly in the country already use a language of the area in debates either generally or on specified days of the week.

At national level, English is still dominant and may remain so for a long time because the will to enforce the clause in the Constitution permitting the use of major Nigerian languages does not seem to be there. As for the Constitution, a translation into some Nigerian languages is already in progress, and some of our colleagues are involved in this exercise. As linguists, it is our responsibility to insist on the political empowerment that the use of Nigerian languages can confer on the masses of our people by giving them access to the kind of information that the elites hoard and manipulate. In a recent lecture, I had cause to observe as follows:

A constant complaint about governance in the African context is the high

... incidence of social and political ills, such as rampant corruption, nepotism, manipulation of electoral laws, and rigging of elections. People often wonder why it is possible for African leaders and their associates to get away with such ills. I venture to suggest that one possible explanation is

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that because the majority of the electorate has been kept ignorant, the minority of critics of misrule are easily accepted, as branded by government propaganda, as obstructionists, extremists and enemies of progress (Bamgbose 2005c).

SR dictates that we should be actively involved in any measures that can empower our languages for maximum use in the political system, and, as I mentioned earlier, we must also be willing to engage in advocacy to make such empowerment possible.

#### **(h) Social Responsibility and the Media**

Information dissemination and contribution to information dissemination through feedback are an essential aspect of participation, which, as has just been mentioned, is an essential ingredient of a democratic system. The media have a crucial role to play in the local and national system and it is heartening to see that Nigerian languages as well as Nigerian Pidgin are being increasingly used for information dissemination. Such use involves language development, particularly vocabulary expansion and translation. I believe that newscasters in most of our media houses who have to cope with instant translation of news in English into Nigerian languages are doing a fine job and deserve to be commended. Two points, however, remain to be made. First vocabulary expansion is a technical undertaking with its own procedures and methodology. Linguists need to come to the rescue to offer training courses to enhance the capability of our newscasters in this laudable work.

Second, most of our electronic media are government-owned and they foul the air with government propaganda. Witness what is going on now on State radio stations as broadcasters fall over one another to sing the praises of incumbent governors, who are up for reelection for a second term. There is need for independent radio and TV stations, which are not only interested in hip-hop music and recycled videotapes. Of particular importance is the need to sponsor an enabling bill in the National Assembly to allow for community radios to be established in the country. By their very nature and having regard to the fact that they are designed to serve small communities, virtually all of them will have to broadcast in Nigerian languages. If properly directed, such radio stations may well revolutionize information sharing in the same way as the mobile phone has revolutionized communication in the country. As far as communication in Nigerian languages is concerned, the print media lag behind. Is the problem one of readership or is it that of technical expertise? For us as linguists, it is a challenge and our SR is to ensure that more Nigerian languages are used in the media.

#### **The Role of the LAN in Relation to Social Responsibility**

Given the various domains in which we, as Nigerian linguists, can exercise our SR, what can LAN do to facilitate the promotion of Nigerian languages? First, in terms of language empowerment, there could be individual or joint action. I have already referred to advocacy in connection with the use of Nigerian languages as working languages in Houses of Assembly. We can all resolve to liaise with legislators in the various States to facilitate this policy and practice. Even at the level of our institutions, we can encourage the elevation of Nigerian languages to



study at degree level. It is not enough for degree programmes to exist in the bigger languages alone. In this connection, I was gratified to read a news item from the *Daily Sun* of January 2, 2004 reporting that the first eight students to major in Efik would be graduating at the University of Calabar that year. What was also of interest in the report was the plan announced by the Obong of Calabar to award scholarships for students of the area, who would wish to study the language and the levy of 200 Naira per family as contribution to the promotion of the language. Linguists should encourage such local initiatives, and provide the necessary language development expertise.

Specifically, I would like to propose the following concrete actions by LAN:

- Given that 2006 is the AU-approved **Year of African Languages** devoted to the promotion of African languages in education and as working languages in the public domain, LAN should campaign vigorously with the Executive and Legislative branches of the Federal Government to have the decision to scrap NINLAN rescinded forthwith since the institution is the only viable avenue for the rapid production of secondary school teachers of Nigerian languages.
- LAN should put in place a Committee on Social Issues to examine issues related to language, particularly language rights and any derogation of such rights as well and to formulate and execute plans for language empowerment.
- LAN should put before the Government detailed proposals for the establishment of a National Language Commission, which will serve as the country's apex language structure, particularly in relation to the Statutes of the AU-approved African Academy of Languages (ACALAN). This will be without prejudice to the setting up of similar commissions at the lower levels of government, i.e. State Language Commission, and Local Language Commission.
- LAN should seek funds for the establishment of a Social Responsibility in Linguistics Endowment (SRILE), the proceeds of which will be used for award of grants and prizes on works of outstanding social responsibility.

### **Concluding Remarks**

In this Keynote Address, I have emphasized the responsibility of a linguist to be sensitive to the language needs of the community among whom he or she works. Doing fieldwork, analyzing data and publishing papers in learned journals should not be our only preoccupation as linguists. Our social responsibility demands that we look beyond the classroom to see how we can empower Nigerian languages, including even the so-called minority languages, for use in education and other domains. One linguist, who epitomizes the qualities expected in a linguist imbued with social responsibility for the speakers of the languages on which she works was the late Professor Kay Williamson, who, for many years, was my colleague at the University of Ibadan before she later moved to the University of Port Harcourt. She not only distinguished herself in her work on the phonology and syntax of Izon, but also on the comparative/historical relationships in the Niger-Congo family of languages. In spite of her enormous theoretical and descriptive



contributions in the field, for which she was duly honoured with the Honorary Membership of the Linguistic Society of America and the Fellowship of the Nigerian Academy of Letters, she devoted a substantial part of her time to the Rivers Readers Project, which was designed to make available material in several languages and dialects spoken in the Rivers State, so that they could be used as medium of instruction in schools. Apart from language policy, which she studiously avoided because she believed it was a matter best left to policy-makers, Kay Williamson also had serious concern for practical orthography, publishing in Nigerian languages, and data gathering through wordlists, all of which many linguists may not consider academically or professionally rewarding.

It is to this internationally acclaimed scholar and teacher, who laboured tirelessly in the description of Nigerian languages, and combined, with great ease, theoretical insights with practical language concerns, that I dedicate this Keynote Address.

### Note

\*This paper is deliberately published in its origin form as it was delivered as a Keynote Address on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria (LAN)/Silver Jubilee held at the Nigerian Educational Research & Development Council (NERDC), Abuja, Nigeria, November 14, 2006. It is included here purely on its own merit.

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## **2. 25 Years of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria: Some Reflections on the Achievements & Challenges Facing Nigerian & African Studies**

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Interest in African Language Studies (ALS) predates both Berlin for its geo-political importance in Africa, and de Saussure for his significance to the practice of Linguistics as an autonomous discipline concerned with the scientific study of human language. In Africanist studies in general, and ALS in particular, Berlin counts more than de Saussure. For the fortunes of ALS seem to follow in a cause-and-effect manner, the fortunes of African geo-politics, both within and outside Africa. On account of this, therefore, the paper will follow a historical periodization, which reflects this fact and divides into two distinct periods:

- The pre-independence period
- The post-independence period

With Berlin, the colonial language policy was *cuis regio, eius lingua*: the metropolitan European language became the official language. This, coupled with the policies of the evangelizing missionaries, tacitly imposed the European languages as official languages and consigned the indigenous language to the position of ‘auxiliary’ status. That policy allowed African languages to be tolerated for a number of non-official purposes. This situation still persists in spite of ‘flag’ independence more so in a number of former French-, Portuguese-, and Spanish-speaking colonies.

Independence has certainly enhanced the status of languages in Africa. Language use in the workday lives of Africans, changes in the educational curricula as well as offerings in formal and non-formal educational system, and the establishment of Afro-centric institutions at national and regional levels are some evidence of these changes. While considering the involvement of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria (LAN) in the dynamics of these changes, the paper will also reflect on issues of capacity building, pragmatism, descriptivism, and, theory and theorizing in ALS during the quarter century of LAN’s existence in Nigeria.

### **Introduction**

#### **African Language Studies in the Pre-Independence Period**

The pre-independence period in ALS covers from the arrival of the Arabs on the Eastern Horn and to Egypt, and the Northern African areas in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and the Western Sudan areas in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It embraces the European era pioneered by the Portuguese in what has been called “the age of Brusciotto”, followed by the Italians (and some French) in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, for the latter. Not much of scholarly linguistic merit was accomplished at this time

because of the racism and ethnocentrism of the Europeans. It is really a very long period, which calls for further periodization into the pre-Berlin and the post-Berlin periods.

### **African Language Studies in the Pre-Berlin Period**

The early pre-Berlin period from the 15<sup>th</sup> century to immediately before Berlin was dominated by speakers of (some) Romance languages: Portuguese, Italians and some French. They were, for the most part, travellers, traders and missionaries with a *mélange* of interests. Sometimes, their interest in Africans and their languages were tinged by patronizing and exotic considerations.

African Language Studies in the 19<sup>th</sup> century sprouted and flowered in Europe, especially Germany, from where it spilled over, almost simultaneously, to France and England. This period was dominated by Germans operating either from Germany or from other parts of Europe. The terrain was crowded by the Bleeks, Mullers, Meinhoffs, Koelles, Krapfs, Westernmanns, Lukas, Lichensteins. Accounts of their linguistic activities have been fully surveyed in useful but dated classics by, among others, D.T. Doke (1971), Hair (1967). In keeping with the spirit of that age in Europe, practice in African languages was monopolized by comparative philologists with their pet interests in reconstruction, proto-forms, proto-language, typology and language classification. Wordlists, Eurocentric dictionaries, and Eurocentric pedagogic grammars were their stock-in-trade. But the everlasting contribution of the period to African Language Studies is in the subject of African language classification, a pre-occupation which has continued to fascinate Africanists: Africans and non-Africans.

### **African/Nigerian Language Studies in the Post-Berlin Period: *Cuis Regio, Eius Lingua***

Berlin, as we have already said, is an important but disturbing reality in African history and historiography. It brought African into history and carved it into, sometimes, bizarre geo-polities and tagged on to these configurations, names whose histories were as whimsical and as illogical as the spirit of Berlin. The absence of unifying languages in most of the “new” and “vanquished” nations paved the way for the victors to impose their metropolitan languages such that *cuis regio* became *eius lingua*. This has resulted, for example, in West Africa in the:

- a. Anglophone nations: The Gambia, Sierra-Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria and Southern Cameroon.
- b. The Francophone nations: Guinea, Senegal, Mali, Cote d’Ivoire (Ivory Coast), Burkina Faso (Upper Volta), Benin (Togo), Dahomey, Niger and the Northern Cameroon; and
- c. The Lusophone nations: Guinea-Bissau, Fernando Po, and Cape Verde.

Before Berlin, the Cross/Crescent dominated everything in Africa. After Berlin, the Crown not only followed the Cross/Crescent, it overtook and dominated it such that *cuis regio* became *eius religio* and, to the extent that, at the beginning of colonial rule, most of the francophone and Lusophone nations were Catholic in keeping with the colonial policy of assimilation; whilst in the Anglophone nations, protestants (of different denominations) and Catholics lived cheek-by-jowl

because of the *laissez faire* British policy of indirect rule. The references to the Cross/Crescent and the Crown are symbolic in more ways than one. At the level of African language studies, they symbolize the fact that the colonial government and the language of its bureaucracy, and the dominant religion and the language of its proselytization, conditioned the colonial language policies. Between Berlin and the eve of Independence in Africa, significant strides were made in African Language Studies, in/through:

- i. More insightful descriptions of various aspects of African languages, e.g. typology – as seen in Crowther on Yoruba, R.E. Laman on Kongo; Daniel Jones on Tswana; Ida Ward on Efik, Igbo, Yoruba, Twi; L.E. Armstrong on Kikuyu. There were also works on Igbo dialectology, Yoruba grammar and lexicography, Ewe lexicography (and) African language classification.
- ii. The transcription, translation and adaptation of African folklore in African languages and the beginnings of creative writing and a literary tradition in African languages.
- iii. The establishment in 1926 of the Institute of African Languages and Cultures (ILALC), the predecessor of the present-day International African Institute (IAI). This Institute has played significant roles in the standardization and/or stabilization of the orthographies of African languages through the award of prizes;
- iv. The enunciation of (national) language policies. In the Francophone countries, it was straight-for-French, in the Lusophone countries straight-for-Portuguese and in the Anglophone countries, especially, Ghana and Nigeria, through the Education Ordinances and Codes, notably that of 1926, it was straight-for-English, after initial literacy of a few years, in the mother tongue.
- v. Literacy (initial, formal and adult) in the mother tongue through the Sunday school, Catechism classes, Craft Centres and Koranic schools;
- vi. Development of orthographies;
- vii. Development of texts of various types and categories: pedagogic grammars, especially for foreigners, e.g. Ward's (1941) grammar of Igbo, bilingual (or even trilingual) dictionaries, religious texts, including the translation of (parts) the Bible, catechisms, primers and creative works in African languages;
- viii. The emergence, codification and propagation of the standard varieties of 'major' African lingua francas.

We shall close the discussion of the pre-independence period of African Language Studies with some observations on the resource persons and consumers of African Language Studies, then. During the early pre-Berlin era, the resource persons were Europeans: travellers, traders and missionaries, and the audience were equally Europeans. During the post-Berlin era, the resource persons were missionaries, comparatists, ethnographers. The audience was as mixed as the resource persons. Most of the analytical works about African languages were done by non-Africans and Africans alike. But practically all the materials in the African languages were done by either ex-diaspora Africans: Adjai Crowther in Yoruba, Simon Jonas in Igbo or homebred Africans: S. Ahamba Pita and Nwana in Igbo, and D.O.



Fafunwa in Yoruba, or extroverted and ultra-enthusiastic Europeans such as Archdeacon Dennis in Igbo or Schön in Hausa.

### **African/Nigerian Languages Studies in the Post-Independence Era**

Other than Liberia and Ethiopia (formerly Abyssinia), African nations began to be independent of colonial rule from the mid – 1950s beginning with Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast) in 1957, followed by Nigeria in 1960. The Organization of African Unity (O.A.U) was founded in 1963 followed the merger of the Monrovia and Casablanca blocs. The issues of independence and the O.A.U. are significant from the Afro-African ideological viewpoint. In matters of African languages, as in other matters, Africans began to be Afrocentric in their desire to emphasize their Africanness. With indigenous universities, Afrocentric outlooks got established. Before independence, linguistics was little heard of in the curricula of tertiary institutions. What was heard of was phonetics, the phonetics of English, as a specialized component of the undergraduate program in English Studies. It is this phonetics component which evolved in 1963/64 into an independent Department of Linguistics at the University of Ghana, Legon, and the Department of Linguistics and Nigerian (now African) Languages, University of Ibadan in 1965/66. There were two basic differences between the Ghanaian (Legon) and the Nigerian (Ibadan) experiences. At Legon, linguistics started as an undergraduate programme, whereas at Ibadan, it started as a post-graduate programme awarding the Post-graduate Diploma in Linguistics. In Ghana, Linguistics and Ghanaian languages developed in different institutions. The Legon Department of Linguistics traces its beginnings to the language Centre and the Institute of African Studies at Legon, while the study of Ghanaian languages traces its history to the School of Ghana Languages established in 1970 as a tertiary institution to train teachers for the major Ghanaian languages – Ewe, Ga, Akan and Dagbani. It is interesting to note that some of the Anglophone African linguists in West Africa were trained at/by Legon for Ghana: G. Ansre (formerly of the Language Centre), L. Boadi, I. Chinebuah (Department of Linguistics): or at/by Ibadan for Nigerian: Bamgbose, Williamson, Olatunji, Nwachukwu, etc., etc.

The setting up of specialized centres for African Studies in Ghana (Legon) in Nigeria (Nsukka, Ibadan), the Centre for the Study of Nigerian Languages at Bayero University Kano, the Centre for Cultural Studies (Lagos) was a significant feature of this era. We have academies such as the Lesotho Language Academy, the Academy of Ethiopian languages; institutes, such as the Institute of Kiswahili Research in Tanzania; the Institute of African and Asian Studies in Khartoum; The National Institute for Nigeria Languages, Aba, Nigeria and specialized centres such as the Centre for Research in Oral Literature in Kiswahili, Hausa and Amharic in the Sudan; the Regional Centres for Research on Oral Traditions and African National Languages in Niamey (CHELTO) and its counterparts in Zanzibar (EACRONATAL) and Zaire (CERDOLA). All these institutions specialized in research into all aspects of African Studies. Some of the significant contributions to African languages and literatures have come from these centres. Also some of the well-known authorities on African languages and literatures have come from these centres. Indeed, some of the outstanding authorities on African Languages and Literatures have been based in such centres. In Nigeria: Ibadan, Nsukka and Ife (before it was disbanded in 1975), the Institutes of African Studies



made significant contributions to the study of both major and non-major Nigerian languages, especially in their catchment areas – and even beyond. The late Professor Robert Armstrong was a whole institution at Ibadan. His contributions were many and Catholic: Igbo, Idoma and Yoruba. At Ife, the contributions of Chief Isaac Delano, especially to the development of Yoruba Monolingual Dictionaries are significant. Wande Abimbola, Olasope Oyeloaran, Chief Olajubu, Ola Rotimi, - all these were at one time or the other, in the Institute of African Studies at Ile Ife. Two of the lasting fallouts from the dismemberment of the defunct Institute at Ife, are the book *Yoruba Language and Literature* edited by Adebisi Afolayan, and the creation of the Department of African Languages and Literatures at Ife. With respect to Igbo, the first ever workshop on Igbo Language and Literature as hosted in 1971 by the Institute of African Studies at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. There have been follow-up workshops on Igbo language, literature and culture sponsored by the Institute. All these institutes have or had (in the case of Ife) virile journals, which continue(d) to give a sizeable portion of their space to African languages and literatures; the old and new *Odu* at Ife, *Ikenga* and *Ikorok* at Nsukka, and *African Notes* at Ibadan. What the Institutes did for Nigerian languages are literatures at Ife, Nsukka, and Ibadan, especially for Yoruba, Idoma and Igbo, the Centre for the Study of Nigerian Languages at Bayero University had done for Hausa, Kanuri and Fulfulde in the northern parts of the country. The late Ibrahim Yaro Yahaya lived his whole intellectual life in the Bayero University, Kano centre. Before we leave the issue of the contributions of these Institutes/Centre(s), we need to mention that the Rivers Readers Project (RRP) was initially based at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan.

### **Introduction of African Languages & Literatures into Tertiary Institutions**

Independence brought with it pride in the African personality. At the intellectual level, it raised African Studies in general and African languages and literatures in particular, to the level of academic disciplines very much in line with the recommendations of the Phelps-Stokes Commission and the Education Ordinance and Code of 1926. This new emphasis required the creation of special(ized) departments or post-secondary schools for the study of African languages. The School of Ghana Languages at Ajumako was established (in Ghana) in 1971 to train teachers with diplomas in the four major Ghanaian languages. Departments with similar aims were set up in designated specialist post-secondary teachers colleges. In 1979/80, the Department of Education at Cape Coast introduced the Diploma in Advanced Studies in Education in keeping with the demands of the “New Structure and Content of Education” in Ghana. Ghanaian languages constituted one area of specialization. In Nigeria, Departments of Nigerian/African Language and Literatures (or Cultures) exist in practically all conventional Nigerian universities (with or without a linguistics component); Colleges of Education/Advanced Teachers Colleges, Colleges of Technology/Polytechnics, and Colleges of Basic/Preliminary Studies. Between them, these institutions have produced most of the personnel, curricula, textual materials of all sorts – orthographies, dictionaries, grammars, textbooks for all levels of education, metalanguage, etc., currently in use in the whole of the formal and informal school systems. Most of the second-generation Nigerian linguists, writers were homebred

in these institutions. The capacity building harvest has been enormous and powerful, and, in materials, prodigious, protean and ever-expanding.

### Founding of Africa-Based Linguistic/Language Societies

Before independence, Africans revelled in belonging to Euro-American linguistic/language actively societies. With independence, Africans began to found, belong to and participate actively in their own regional/national/ethnic linguistic/language or cultural societies. In West African, the West African Linguistic Society (WALS) was formally founded in 1965 (when the Constitution was adopted) even though it was sponsored by the West African Language Survey from the ashes of which it grew. The Linguistic Association of Nigeria (LAN) was founded in 1980. Both WALS and LAN share the following aims and objectives (and these are similar to those of other national or regional linguistic association);

- a. “to offer membership to and ensure permanent contact among all who are engaged in the scholarly study of the languages of West African/Nigeria, of their literatures and of any other national or regional linguistic associations);
- b. “to initiate, encourage and support scholarly research in this field both for scientific purposes and to assist African nations/Nigeria with the linguistic aspects of West African/Nigerian educational and social development;
- c. “to organize annual/biennial meetings, conferences congresses as may be thought desirable in furtherance of the aims of these associations;
- d. “to establish and publish regularly, learned journals to be known as the *Journal of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria* (JOLAN) and to assist with the publication of relevant materials from scholarly research in these areas;
- e. “to offer grants for research in these areas whenever practicable and desirable;
- f. “to co-operate with or establish association with any international body as may seem desirable and, in particular with International Council for philosophy and Humanistic Sciences, thereby entering into official relationship with UNESCO in furtherance of the aims of these associations”.

In contrast with, say the Linguistic Society of America, the primary “objective” of which is “the advancement of the scientific study of language”, both WALS and LAN have spelt out in detail the implications of the major and only goal of linguistics for the geo-polities in which they operate. It is this global, catholic and national conscience, which requires, for example, LAN to have a relevant theme for each of its annual conferences (LAN) and annual general meetings (AGMs). So far, LAN has had more than sixteen conferences all of which have focused on relevant socio-political linguistic issues, as follows:

| Date | VENUE                        | THEME                               |
|------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1980 | University of Ibadan, Ibadan | The Linguistic Situation in Nigeria |
| 1981 | Bayero University, Kano      | Languages in Nigeria                |
| 1982 | University of Ilorin, Ilorin | Languages in National Development   |

|      |                                                   |                                                                                       |
|------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1983 | University of Benin,<br>Benin City                | Application of Linguistics in the Nigerian Context                                    |
| 1984 | University of Nigeria, Nsukka                     | Language, Literature, Education and Publishing                                        |
| 1985 | Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria                    | Language use in a Multi-Cultural Setting                                              |
| 1986 | University of Maiduguri,<br>Maiduguri             | Minority Languages and lingua Francas in Nigeria                                      |
| 1987 | University of Port Harcourt<br>Port Harcourt      | Linguistics in the Implementation of the National Language Policy.                    |
| 1988 | Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile<br>Ife            | Originality in the Study of Language and Literature: Prospects for Nigerian paradigms |
| 1989 | University of Jos,<br>Jos                         | Pragmatism and the Study of Nigerian Languages and Literatures                        |
| 1990 | University of Calabar, Calabar                    | The Study and Use of Languages in Nigeria since Independence                          |
| 1991 | Imo State University, Okigwe                      | The Role of Theories in Language Study in Nigeria                                     |
| 1992 | University of Abuja,<br>Abuja                     | Language, National Unity and the Democratization Process                              |
| 1995 | Ondo State University, Ondo                       | Language and Literature in a changing Society                                         |
| 1997 | Usman Danfodiyo University,<br>Sokoto             |                                                                                       |
| 1998 | National Institute for Nigerian<br>Languages, Aba | Towards a Pragmatic Language Policy for Nigeria                                       |
| 2004 | University of Port Harcourt,<br>Port Harcourt     | Globalization and Nigerian Languages                                                  |
| 2005 | University of Nigeria, Nsukka                     | Nigerian Languages and the Reforms Agenda                                             |
| 2006 | University of Abuja                               | Nigerian Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Policy Reforms                          |

A close look at the themes and papers presented at the annual conference of LAN will reveal a commitment and relevance to national issues, which many of Euro-American linguists will dismiss as 'pragmatist'. The achievements of LAN during its first decades of existence, were documented for the Director of the ESCAS

Department of the O.A.U. as follows, by Munzali Jibril (1988), Secretary of LAN:<sup>2</sup>

Within the period, LAN has made significant achievements in various areas. Our membership strength is about 300 and continues to grow from year to year. Most of our members are high-calibre linguists who teach in Universities (among other tertiary institutions). LAN has... been able to organize its annual conferences regularly in the last eight years. These are attended by an average of 80 participants and some fifty papers are usually presented at each conference. The communiqués issued at the end of these conferences help to (sensitize) create linguistic awareness and also make available views of experts on linguistic issues in the country. LAN has... won the confidence and recognition of the Nigerian Government as the leading professional association of linguists in the country. In this regard, it is worthy of note that the Government makes an annual subvention to LAN (N2,500.00 in 1987) through the Language Centre of the Federal Ministry of Education. In addition, LAN is officially represented on government committees, which deal with linguistic issues, e.g. the Committee Planning of the National Language Survey of Nigeria or the Advisory Committee of the National Language Centre (ACNLC). 80% of the places and ACNLC Chairman are all LAN members. The Group on the Use of National Languages in Education, and the Association of National Educational Projects of Educational Innovation for Development in Africa (NEIDA) are LAN members. In Nigeria, LAN members chair and dominate the language sub-committees of the national and regional language committees of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), the Joint Admissions Matriculation Board Examination (JAMB), the NTI and State Languages Boards for the JSS; LAN has commissioned the compilation of an index of theses, dissertations and long essays on Nigerian Languages written in Nigerian Universities and other tertiary institutions. This, when completed, will be available to interested institutions and persons for a small fee; LAN is compiling a Directory of Linguists in Nigeria, complete with their qualifications and areas of specialization... (to be) put at the disposal of interested institutions and persons. LAN publishes a Newsletter twice a year in order to disseminate information and other professional news to members and other interested bodies or persons; LAN is affiliated to the Committee International Permanent Des Linguistes (CIPL) and Professor Ayo Bamgbose, is a member of the Executive Committee of CIPL. LAN pays an annual subscription of \$200 to keep its membership of CIPOL; LAN... considered affiliation to the Association International de Linguistique exchange cost of AILA membership; The Journal of LAN, *JOLAN*, has also established itself as a creditable and respectable learned publication both in Nigeria and in the U.S.A. Three numbers of this have appeared: I – III;

In recognizing the contributions and achievements of national and regional linguistic/language societies one should also acknowledge the contributions of the

former Institute of Linguistics in Ghana. Togo, Cameroon; The Bible Translation Trusts in Ghana, Togo and Nigeria, the Summer Institute of Linguistics, and Islamic Societies in the northern and eastern parts of Africa to the development of literacy in African languages.

### **Pragmatics and African Language Studies Today**

Commitment to the development of African languages has its historical antecedents and ideological underpinnings in international agencies such as Phelps-Stokes (1920 – 23); IAI (1926); UNESCO (1951, 1953); UNESCO 1959 in Nigeria; UNESCO 1963 in Kampala; UNESCO Ten Year Plan 1972/73; UNESCO Horizon 2,000 Project 1981; pan-African agencies such as the O.A.U. Ministers of Culture Meeting in April 1986 – where the Language Plan of Action of Africa was enunciated. This meeting created the Pan-African Linguistic Association to implement the Language Plan – a position which was subsequently adopted by the 44<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the O.A.U. Council of Ministers in Addis Ababa in July 1986. Regional bodies such as WALS (1970); national bodies such as LAN (1980); All these agencies/bodies have as their ultimate objectives:

- i. The promotion and development of African languages in all respects;
- ii. The encouragement of African governments to implement the Language Plan of Action for Africa through the elaboration and implementation of language policies which favour the use of African languages;
- iii. The encouragement and co-ordination of activities in African languages among linguistic associations at all levels.
- iv. The movement towards the linguistic liberation and unity of African.

These objectives are visible in extensive language planning programs in the complementary areas of graphization, language standardization, text development, metalanguages and capacity building.

The UNESCO Horizon 2,000 Project of 1981 is the Blueprint defining the strategy for the promotion of African languages. Anticipating the recommendations of that project or following them, most African nations, especially the Anglophones have attempted the following:

- i. Revision of colonial education policies and, by implications, language policies or more correctly sensitized the language policies or education policies to be more relevant, more progressive, more nationalistic and more Afrocentric. For example, in Ghana, 1974 saw the New Structure and Content of Education<sup>3</sup>. The 1966 indigenous language policy was emphasized and reinforced and the role of the indigenous language in education was strengthened and accorded more respect. Nigeria's *National Policy on Education 1977* (Revised 2002) has the same focus for Nigerian languages like that in Ghana. In both Ghana and Nigeria, implementation agencies have been set up or given more enabling power for this policy. In Ghana, there were the language Centre at Legon, the School of Ghana Languages at Ajomako, the Bureau of Ghanaian Languages, the Ghanaian Languages' panel established within the Curriculum. Research and Development Division of the Ghana Education Service. In Nigeria, the



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- establishment of the National Languages Centre, 1971, now subsumed under the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) (as its Language Development Centre), the introduction of the major Nigerian languages as core/compulsory subjects in the Junior/Senior Secondary Schools across the nation, the entrenchment of the major languages in the 1999 *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, the appointment of Special Federal and State Inspectors for Nigerian Languages, the phenomenal increase in intake into tertiary institutions with offerings in Nigerian languages – as L<sub>1</sub>/L<sub>2</sub>, automatic employment for qualified teachers of Nigerian languages especially in the Federal Public Service, and the introduction of incentives for teachers of Nigerian languages, especially in the Federal Public Service;
- ii. Experiments in mother-tongue education, for initial or primary literacy as in the RRP; the Ife SYPP, and informal or adult literacy which scored great success in Kano State through the State's Agency for Mass Literacy;
  - iii. Extensive use of African/Nigerian languages in the print and electronic media. The air-time given to Nigerian languages is much indeed. Apart from having special services in the languages, advertisements and other features are many in these languages too. Editors, producers and newscasters/telecasters specially trained in the languages now man these services or programmes;
  - iv. Establishment of newspapers – dailies and weeklies, pullouts in newspapers and news magazines, comics in African/Nigerian languages by the Federal and State governments and by private entrepreneurs;
  - v. Extensive publishing of African/Nigerian languages. The amount of published (and publishable) materials – in written literature (in all the genres), transcriptions of all genres of orature, descriptive and pedagogic grammars, dictionaries, translations – is staggering and intimidating. In fact, since 1972 when Oxford University Press Nigeria (now University Press Limited) employed the present writer as its first editor for Igbo, it is now the practice for all serious publishers in Nigeria, to have, in-house editors for each of the major Nigerian languages.
  - vi. Lastly, and, certainly most importantly, the establishment in 1992 of the National Institute for Nigeria Languages, Aba, to train and re-train teachers of Nigerian languages to meet the needs of the language provisions of the NPE, and the UBE.

### **Theory and Theorizing in African Nigerian Language Studies**

There are not a few Euro-Americans who write off African language studies, especially African linguistics (in Africa) as being atheoretical, too pragmatic or, at best, just too simply descriptivist. Clearly, no academic endeavour can be undertaken without some back-up theory. Even when the theory is not well-articulated, or formalized, it is still there, latent and potent. If, as the late Ahmed Sekou Toure correctly pointed out, the absence of a language policy in Guinea was itself a policy – the absence of a theory is itself a theory! But African linguists are not unaware of all the various competing and sometimes, conflicting theories in linguistics – with their high attrition rates! Every dissertation or thesis offered for a higher degree in African/Nigerian language studies is often based on some theory.



Theses by Africans published as books or monographs in the “West African Languages Monograph Series”, or reproduced by the Indiana University Linguistics Club in the “Studies in African Grammatical systems” series cannot be said to be bereft of theory. Works of this nature which

... serve the world-wide community of linguists by making available... information of significant breadth and scope on the structures of particular languages and presented in terms accessible to scholars of heterogeneous backgrounds and theoretical orientations

cannot be said to be written without the benefit of theoretical underpinning. African linguists are well-informed about all current theories in linguistics. But they are forced by the imperatives of their socio-economic and political conditions to use these theories rather than make a fetish of them. African linguists, therefore, are for now, more like technologists in linguistics rather than pure scientists, because they have to be more interested in the applied and social aspects of their discipline. Besides, African linguistics is barely four decades old and is, therefore, understandably preoccupied with descriptivism – in general and taxonomy in particular. This is the natural, historical path in universal linguistic evolution with antecedents in Europe, America and elsewhere in the world.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, American linguistics was heavily descriptivist and concerned with taxonomy. Now, with the benefit of hindsight, we can see that linguistics needed Franz Boas, Edward Sapir, Leonard Bloomfield and Zellig Harris to produce Noam Chomsky and the big revolution in “the Generative Enterprise” that has followed him in all areas of linguistics. There are, however, countries in Europe where linguists and linguistics have not been completely swept off their feet by the Chomskyan revolution. For example, British linguistics as practised by John Lyons, M.A.K. Holliday, F.K. Palmer, Geoffrey Leech, R. Quirk and Sidney Greenbaum, among others, remains solidly structuralist and pragmatic. Thus, in Britain and the European continent, TG in its many modifications, coexist with other schools of grammar, including the more recent ***cognitive grammar***. African linguists operate in socio-political and economic milieux that have not yet reached their optimal levels of development in terms of material culture, and African nations are plagued by linguistic problems, which only a few Euro-Americans are aware of, or even care much about. Banjo (1983:20-21) correctly pointed out some 23 years ago that:

Nigerian linguistic scholarship... is less than forty years old. Today, the discipline flourishes in many of the country's universities and there are even signs that the government is beginning to appreciate the practical values of the discipline. While keeping abreast of theoretical development in the discipline, Nigerian linguists display a profound awareness of the contributions that their discipline can make to the survival and good health of the nation. The language problems of... Nigeria (and of Africa) are probably more serious than the much lamented economic (and socio-political) problems. Language and effective education, language and national unity - these are two of the

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ultimate questions for Nigeria in the context of four hundred indigenous languages and a foreign official (exoglossic) language.<sup>4</sup>

This fully explains why all the Conferences of LAN have had very strong sociolinguistic (sub) themes or biases. For, in spite of their theoretical orientations or commitment to theory, modern African linguists end up as ‘generalists’, sociolinguists and applied linguists battling with the linguistic dimensions of ethnic nationalism, plurilingualism, national lingua francas, language endangerment, metalanguage, language standardization, orthographies, taxonomy in basic linguistic research - all of which are relevant, live and politically as well as socially significant issues in African/Nigerian language studies.

Is it true nationalism and patriotism for an African linguist to bury his head in reconstructing proto-forms or moving alphas when he lives in a society full of languages whose phonemes, morphemes, word structures, and significant grammatical categories are unknown; languages without orthographies, written grammars and dictionaries or textual materials for literacy? What is the sense in an African literary scholar, in African languages, spending sleepless nights worrying about the theories of literature or about *ars gratia artis* when basic issues such as the valid genres in his oral literature or the structure or delimitation of the poetic line or of prose narrative or dramatic forms have not been addressed? For us, it is simply intellectual irresponsibility, academic suicide and lack of commitment to national development - only analogous to one running after a rat while one's house is on fire! It is this type of concern that makes the modern African/Nigerian linguist a jack-of-all-trades: a descriptivist - at the core, a language engineer, a language educator, a creative writer (where he is endowed), a literary critic or stylistician, a translator, an interpreter, a folklorist - if he cares, a teacher of linguistics and of his language, and a text-book writer. Forced by all these important concerns to spread himself thin, it is no surprise that most African linguists do not have the time, luxury or patience for theory for theory's sake - as it is with Euro-American, Chomskyan linguistics - in the Old World - where the theories and sub-theories suffer excessive attrition!

## Conclusion

### LAN at 25 Odds-and-Ends: Achievements, Challenges and Projections

This paper has deliberately situated LAN and Nigerian Language Studies (NLS) in the context of ALS in order to draw attention to the fact that whatever was going on in Nigeria, in ALS was not isolated but dictated by the realities of time in African geopolitical, especially, colonialist politics. LAN needed the imperatives and impetus of WALS, CHELTO, EACRONATAL AND CERDOLA to be, just as ANLAT, ANPILC and the many ethnically-based language (planning) associations needed LAN to be.

- Nigerian Linguistics (NL) and NLS are clearly much older than LAN. Indeed, LAN is about half the age of NL and NLS. NL and NLS have fathered LAN and sustained it as a professional and learned society. The conception, birth, evolution, sustenance and survival of LAN bear all this out.

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- Munali Jibril's brief on the activities of LAN needs to be updated in many significant respects to reflect the realities today.
  - In terms of longevity, LAN is one Nigerian learned society or association that has managed to stay alive and to hold its (annual) conferences. This fact is not unaware that for a few years LAN's existence was precarious: 1993 – 94, 1996 – 2002.
  - In terms of membership, we are aware that not all who research on or teach linguistics, African, Nigerian and foreign languages in the Nigerian educational system are registered with LAN. But we are aware that LAN members form the bulk of those who research on and teach Linguistics and African languages in tertiary institutions of learning. In addition, LAN members are at the commanding heights of linguistics and Nigerian/African languages' departments.
  - In terms of human capacity NL, NLS and LAN have come of age. LAN members call the shots and dominate as researchers, teachers, consultants, language administrators, language engineers, language educators, assessors.
  - LAN members are designers of languages' and linguistics' curricula, writers and authors of instructional materials for all levels and types of formal and non-formal education.

Perhaps one way of fully appreciating the variety, depth and breadth of human capacity in LAN is in the numerous publications on and in hundreds of Nigerian languages and linguistics, including *JOLAN* and the **Festschrift Series for Nigerian Linguists**<sup>5</sup> founded and edited by Professor Ozo-mekuri Ndimele, LAN's current National President.

### **The Fortunes of NINLAN**

NINLAN is one of the solid achievements of LAN, albeit an indirect one. If there are any three LAN members and Nigerians who have the fullest picture of how and why NINLAN came to be, Nwanolue Emenanjo is one of them. As a member of the defunct Advisory Committee of the National Language Centre for most of its existence, a Consultant to the Federal Government on the Production of Teachers for the Major Nigerian Languages (1988), a two-term President of LAN (1986-88, 1988-1990). National Secretary, Committee of Provosts of Colleges of Education in Nigeria (1990-1992), one of the keynote speakers at the Abeokuta Seminar on Teaching Nigerian languages as L<sub>2</sub> and participant/resource person at the Ota Seminar (1992) and pioneer Executive Director and a two-term Executive Director, of NINLAN, Nwanolue Emenanjo was physically present at all venues where and when all the thinking, briefs, paper work, leg work, politicking and documentation about NINLAN were made. If is the presence of Nwanolue Emenanjo at the apposite times and places that explains why NINLAN is the only language institution among what are called the Inter-University Centres that had an extent enabling statute as far back as 1993. LAN is one of NINLAN's core stakeholders and a member of its Governing Council.

Just as NINLAN is one of the LAN's achievements, it is also one of its greatest challenges. NINLAN is not an accident nor just another Federal parastatal (too many) in the Federal Ministry of Education. Elsewhere in Africa – in Ghana,

Lesotho, Ethiopia and Tanzania, institutions like NINLAN exist. In Europe, specialist degree-awarding language/Linguistics institutions and even universities exist. But Nigerian educational administrators, bureaucrats, regulatory and supervisory educational bodies choose to believe that in the world of fruits, there are only apples and oranges! Any fruit that is, therefore, neither an apple nor an orange stands to be eliminated or discarded whenever hard-nosed economists driven by the cold-blooded forces of cost effectiveness - rather than need or relevance - are in charge. To be or not to be - this is what today is stirring NINLAN in the face. Can LAN help NINLAN to be? Shouldn't LAN help NINLAN to be? When in 1999/2000 NINLAN faced this dilemma, as the Executive Director of NINLAN, I involved LAN, and some influential LAN patrons and members. Prof Alex Iwara as the President of LAN at the time, and Prof Ben Elugbe, as nominated by Prof Ayo Bamgbose, were part of the delegation that argued the case before the Ahmed Joda Panel on the Rationalization of Federal Parastatals.

Those familiar with what is happening or likely to happen to NINLAN doubt that at the end of the 'exercise' the NINLAN that survives is what LAN and its members will be proud of. LAN and its members should not, however, despair. Given our knowledge of the nature of historical movements, some day, history and politics will combine to throw up another Fafunwa as Minister of Education in a Federal Government that can find a N50m take-off grant for a NINLAN without prejudice to a N100m released to a Federal Government College for erosion control in its premises! To conclude this section on NINLAN, it needs to be mentioned that its pioneer Executive Director Nwanolue Emenanjo was a two-time President of LAN, while the incumbent, Ben Elugbe was a one-time Secretary of LAN.

### **The Future of Linguistics in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions**

Perhaps, the greatest challenge LAN and its members face today, in Nigeria, is the future of their discipline, linguistics, as an academic one. Today, it is an endangered discipline because of many factors: the most destructive of which is the demands by the National Universities Commission of Universities, that all disciplines must be viable, relevant, and overflowing with students or 'perish'. Faced with this morbid reality, most Linguistics departments have gone double-barrelled with Nigerian, African or even Oriental languages, or Communication Studies, as the second barrel. Of all these, the Communication Studies option has proved the most viable. But this has created a new problem for the departments that have opted for it. The harvest is very rich with students but only few of these are interested in Linguistics and/or Nigerian Languages at the sub-degree, degree and postgraduate levels! Aren't there other possibilities? For example: Departments of Linguistics, actually offering viable courses in the literatures in Nigerian Languages at all levels? Or running courses in the interface areas making people to actually graduate in lexicography, stylistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics? With the inevitable collapse of the traditional protective walls between the disciplines, isn't it possible to have curricula in cross-disciplinary areas such as Linguistics and Physics, or ICT, or Mathematics, Medicine (Communication Disorders) or philosophy, or History, or Sociology/Anthropology, etc, etc? Departments of Linguistics should also be

more seriously involved in the all-round development of the non-major Nigerian languages in their catchment areas, so as to make these languages vehicles of literacy and numeracy as well as of socio-economic development.

### **The Fortunes of *JOLAN***

Another challenge facing LAN and its members is the frequency of its Journal. *JOLAN* is clearly in arrears. How do we make up for this and ensure that *JOLAN* not only appears annually but also frequently publishes some “occasional publications” that are not necessary selections from conference papers?

### **The Base of NLS: Home or Abroad?**

The last challenge facing LAN and its members is that they should strive to see to it that NL and NLS are firmly based in Nigeria, and not somewhere in Europe or American, Japan or even China. Home-bred and home-based Nigerian linguists have done very well, so far, in extending the frontiers of linguistic knowledge in all aspects of universal grammar. In spite of all the handicaps and limitations, LAN and its members have contributed immensely to various issues in language planning and implementation at the Federal and State levels. Indeed, today the number of non-Nigerians working on all aspects of all Nigerian languages is very small. Really, Linguistics is not one area in which Nigeria needs ‘technological transfer’ or to import foreign experts. Nigerian linguists may, however, need technical assistance in some areas of their practice in order to keep abreast, especially in the area of metatheories. LAN, as a learned society, and its members, as individuals, need linkage relationships with cognate associations and persons outside, for a mutual cross fertilization of principles and procedures in the overall interest of universal linguistics, and language development. Nigeria linguists should reverse the trend whereby a young man comes from the Old World to Nigeria as a gypsy or on a study grant. He spends a few weeks here and there, in Nigeria, and returns to his home country and starts spinning off ‘original’ and ‘groundbreaking’ articles on all aspects of (selected) Nigerian languages. First, there is a generative phonology, then a comprehensive grammar in one of the new approaches within a metatheory, then a bilingual dictionary. And before you know it, he is regarded or begins to regard himself as the authority on these languages - languages which he neither speaks nor about whose speakers he cares much! Or take another scenario. A Nigerian in the diaspora corners a mouth-watering grant for studies of a Nigerian language-an area of studies different from his area of specialization. Before long, he produces a reference grammar and a definitive dictionary that is full of bizarre orthographic practices or conventions and definitions of phenomena that are, to say the least, strange to the culture of the language!

In spite of all, we believe that the future of LAN is not bleak. LAN and its objectives are still ‘young’ and full of potentials. In addition, LAN, NL and NLS continue to draw their members and practitioners not only from the humanities and the social and behavioral sciences, but also from backgrounds that are endowed with the facility which predisposes them to easily understand the symbols and symbolization in the modern linguistic world which continues to hold that linguistics is a science.



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**Notes**

1. See some of the relevant papers in Sebeok, T. A. ed. 1971. *Current trends in linguistics* Vol. 7 *Linguistics in Sub-Saharan Africa*. The Hague: Mouton, notable D. I. Doke's, paper pp. 1 – 29. Also note Hair, P.E.H. 1967. *The Early study of Nigerian languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Munzali Jibril was at the time, the Secretary of LAN and I was the President. The African Languages Unit of the O.A.U was at that time in the ESCAS Department.
3. I owe this information to G.U. Nutsukpo of the Dept. of English Studies, University of Port Harcourt.
4. Banjo, L.A. 1983 *Grammar and grammarians*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press. This is the text of Prof Banjo's Inaugural Lecture.
5. The Festschrift Series for Nigerian Linguists has as its founding Editor, Prof. Ozo-mekuri Ndimele. Four hefty editions have already been published.
6. See Decree (now Act) 117 of 30<sup>th</sup> December 1993 on The Establishment of the National Institute for Nigerian Languages, Aba.



### **3. Marginalization of Nigerian Languages in Nursery & Primary Schools: Path to Indigenous Language Death in Nigeria**

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This study used a descriptive survey design to find out from thirty-six (36) nursery and primary schools in the Lagos metropolis if they teach Nigerian languages and use the mother-tongue as medium of instruction in nursery and lower primary classes. This would be in accordance with the provisions of the National policy on Education (1977, 2004 revised edition). Results showed that English is used exclusively as medium in nursery and primary schools in twenty-seven (27) schools while a mixture of English and Yoruba, or Yoruba and Pidgin English are used in the remaining nine (9) schools. Similarly, English is taught in all nursery and primary classes in the 36 schools; Yoruba is taught in nursery 1-3 in 10 schools and in primaries 1-6 in 19 schools; French is taught in nursery 1-3 in 8 schools and in primaries 1-6 in 18 schools. Igbo and Hausa are taught in nursery and primary classes in one (1) school each. The Head-teachers and other teachers interviewed appreciated that this marginalization of Nigerian languages would lead to the death of indigenous languages. They, however, report many constraints such as the preference of the schools to assist pupils learn English, the unfavourable attitudes of parents to Nigerian languages; lack of trained indigenous language teachers, books and other instructional materials. They called on parents to teach their children their indigenous language and use it at home. They also called on the government to enforce the compulsory teaching of Nigerian languages in nursery and primary schools, as well as train teachers and provide books and other instructional materials for the teaching and learning of Nigerian languages in nursery and primary schools. In all these, time is of essence. Research suggests Nigerian languages have less than fifty years to live.

#### **Preamble: An Anguished Cry about the Mother-tongue**

No school for my baby... My husband and myself have been going round town looking for a crèche for her, but it is a pity all the good crèches do not have mother-tongue in their programme and none of them are willing to consider it even for a moment (Amalia Dickie, Namphala, Mozambique LEAP News, July 2005:17)

#### **1. Background**

##### **1.1 The Mother-Tongue Debate**

In Nigeria, as in the Mozambique, it is rare to find crèches and other pre-primary institutions that have the mother-tongue in their programmes. The situation is not much different in primary schools where Nigerian languages are not taught in most states, especially in multilingual minority states. This is despite the fact that the National Policy on Education (1977, revised 1981, 1998, 2004) provides that the mother-tongue of the child should be used as medium of instruction in pre-

primary and lower primary classes while they should be taught as subjects in all classes from pre-primary to primary and secondary schools. In reality, however, this is hardly implemented. In areas where the country's three major languages of Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba are spoken, the primary schools generally teach the language of those areas, although the privately-owned schools usually do not teach them. The situation is worse in the multilingual minority states where the remaining three hundred and ninety-one languages are spoken. The indigenous languages of the areas are hardly taught in the primary schools, public or private.

What has been the effect of the marginalization of Nigerian Languages in schools? Right from the early 1970s, educationists have condemned the non-use of African Languages in teaching African children in schools. The Phelps- Stokes Commission to Africa of 1920-21 noted that the practice of using European Languages to teach African children was pedagogically wrong in that it led to little learning and was psychologically and emotionally damaging to the children. In their view:

Native tongue is immensely more vital in that it is one of the chief means of preserving whatever is good in Native customs, ideas and ideals and thereby preserving what is more important than all these, namely, Native self-respect (Lewis 1962:63).

The Phelps-Stokes Commission then recommended the use of the 'tribal language' in the lower primary classes and the 'language of the European nation in control' in the upper classes. Since the Phelps-Stokes Commission, more researches and experiments have shown that the use of the child's indigenous language in his early school years has tremendous cognitive and affective advantages over the use of a foreign medium. Thus, the UNESCO meeting of specialists in their 1953 report recommended that "pupils should begin their schooling through the medium of the mother tongue" and that "the use of the mother-tongue be extended to as late a stage in education as possible" (UNESCO, 1953:47-8).

## **1.2 Educational Reforms and Access and Relevance**

All the reservations that have been expressed in relation to the marginalization of the child's mother-tongue in the educational system have been manifesting in Nigeria. Thus, although Nigeria has recorded tremendous increases in access to education in the last three decades, the relevance of the education received through the various educational reforms and policies remains questionable. In the area of access, Tahir (2001:2) reports that the Universal Primary Education scheme introduced in 1976 increased enrolment in primary schools from six million in 1976 to twelve million in 1980. The increase has been sustained since Nigeria endorsed the Education For All goals agreed upon at Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. The EFA goals sought to extend basic education of 9 years to all citizens, viz: 6 years of primary school and 3 years of junior secondary school while also targeting the area of pre-primary education for expansion. Thus, the handbook on Key Indicators for Basic and Senior Secondary Education in Nigeria published by the Federal Ministry of Education in 2005 noted that the 2005 primary school enrolment was 22,267,407 which represented 96% of the primary school age population of 23,200,448 in Nigeria. Similarly pre-primary education has also

been on the increase in the country. For decades crèches, day care centres and nursery schools have been run by private organizations while the government contented itself with issuing guidelines for their operations. The high fees charged in these private pre-primary institutions, however, caused them to be patronized by children of the rich, to the exclusion of the vast majority of children in the country. Okoro (1998 p.41) reports that by 1991 only 4.7% of the 22.7 million of the country's children aged 1-5 years were enrolled in pre-primary institutions. Since the EFA declaration of 1990, the government has made greater efforts to encourage private sector participation in early childhood education and care. Thus, the Federal Government Education For All Report (2001, p.8) noted that the figure of children receiving some form of pre-school training had risen to 18%. In 2004, the Federal Government of Nigeria decided to participate more actively in early childhood care and education by establishing pre-primary sections in existing public schools. (National Policy on Education, 2004 p.11). This measure, coupled with private sector /NGO/ and community efforts has seen pre-primary education expanding rapidly in different parts of the country, both in urban and rural areas.

Beyond access, however, how relevant is the education being received in these pre-primary and primary institutions that are now permeating all nooks and crannies of the country? The Federal Government's Report on Education For All (2001 pages 26 and 27) discusses the issue of relevance in Education. One of the EFA goals mentioned is: "By 2010, 80% of learning resources will be relevant to learners, gender sensitive and be in language and form which teachers and learners can relate to". The Report further notes one of the strategies for achieving the EFA goals as: "Increased emphasis on culturally sensitive, relevant, and appropriate curriculum content".

Are these goals and strategies being pursued and effected in the pre-primary and primary schools in Nigeria? The issue of relevance in education occupies the front burner in many national and international fora. In an article titled "Basic education in the twenty first century, Ordonez (1998:210) notes that the relevance of the very structure, content and process of the educational endeavour will be increasingly questioned, implying

.... an effort in the next century to come to grips with the persistent malaise of education systems that produce graduates who cannot find jobs, that develop students who do not return to their communities or even their countries because of the alienating experience within a transplanted education system.

### **1.3 Education for all in whose Language?**

The above is the title of an article by Brock-Utne (2000) in which she deplores the fact that the role of language has seldom been considered in many educational policies. This has been the case from the UNESCO conference of African Ministers of Education in 1961 which set a target for universal literacy, but gave little thought to the language on which literacy should be achieved, to the more recent Education For All agenda of the 1990s. If, between the 1960s and 1980s, the concern was on the efficiency of learning achieved in African schools through the use of European languages as media of instruction, the problem now is much more serious as the spectre of resultant language death looms. Deploping the

language death which is often caused by western schooling introduced into Africa, Skutnabb-Kangas (1999:176) says that this schooling:

... has accelerated the death/murder of languages which without formal education had survived for centuries or millennia. One of the main agents in killing languages is thus the linguistic genocide which happens in formal education, every time indigenous or minority children or dominated group children, even if they are a majority in terms of numbers, are educated in a dominant language.

As Nigeria is fast expanding access to pre-primary and primary education in all parts of the country, both urban and rural areas, there is room therefore to feel concern that this could well mean the final onslaught on Nigerian languages and cultures.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Although the National Policy on Education (1977, revised 1981, 1998, 2004) provides for the use of the mother-tongue as medium of instruction in nursery and lower primary classes, and the teaching of indigenous languages as subject in all pre-primary and primary schools classes, observations in many of the schools reveals that these provisions are hardly implemented. More alarming, observation of the pupils in these schools show that not only are many of them not competent in their indigenous languages, but they feel ashamed about their languages and cultures, and indeed about everything Nigerian. One then wonders if the schools appreciate the importance of a child's mother-tongue in the education and overall development of the child, as well as the role of the schools in the preservation and promotion of indigenous languages and cultures.

## **3. The Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to find out if language use and preferences in pre-primary and primary schools in the Lagos metropolis conformed with the provisions of the National Policy on Education (1977, revised 2004). These provisions are that, at the pre-primary school level and the first three years of primary school, the medium of instruction should be the mother-tongue or the language of the immediate community and that the language of the immediate community shall be taught as subject in the pre-primary and primary schools. In addition, the study sought to find out the constraints and difficulties the schools experience about implementing these provisions, while also soliciting their advice on how best to promote and foster indigenous languages in pupils.

## **4. Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- (i) Do pre-primary and primary institutions within the Lagos metropolis use the mother-tongue as medium of instruction?
- (ii) Do they teach the indigenous languages in all pre-primary and primary school classes?
- (iii) What proportion of their pupils speaks their ancestral languages?

- (iv) Do the schools see a link between the learning and use of the mother-tongue by children and the long term survival of indigenous languages?
- (v) What are the constraints and difficulties militating against the teaching and learning of indigenous languages in the school or their use as medium of instruction?
- (vi) What suggestions can the school personnel give towards the successful teaching and learning of indigenous languages and their use as medium of instruction?

### **5. Significance of the Study**

In an era when it has been predicted that only 10% of the world's existing 6000 languages will survive into the 22<sup>nd</sup> century (Krauss, 1992), the dwindling competence of Nigerian children in their indigenous languages cannot be overlooked. This is more so when numerous studies have shown that many Nigerian languages are already endangered. For instance, Shaeffer (1997) warned that Emai, spoken by a small community in Edo State and the 30 different languages spoken in the area would probably be dead by 2050 as they were being steadily supplanted by English. Ugwuoke (1999) came up with a list of 152 endangered Nigerian languages, 90% of which are northern languages. In 2004, Ohiri-Aniche found that, within the Lagos metropolis, among children aged 5 years and under, only 56.58% could speak their parent's indigenous language; among those aged 6 – 11 years, only 68.05% could speak it. She then warned that if the 10% generational drop in indigenous language competence among children is maintained, then in 50 years time, hardly any children would be competent in Nigerian languages within the Lagos metropolis. The main significance of this present study, therefore, is that it will alert the whole nation - the government, the public including parents, school proprietors and personnel and all other stakeholders in education of the great danger posed to the survival of Nigerian languages by their neglect and marginalization in pre-primary and primary schools.

### **6. Population and Sample**

The population consisted of all the pre-primary and primary institutions within the Lagos metropolis. In a preliminary study, the researcher visited many of these institutions in the highbrow areas of Ikoyi and Victoria Island, the low-income areas of Olodi-Apapa and Ajegunle, as well as the middle income areas of Yaba and Ebute Metta. She also looked at the different school types-private, public and faith-based. It was during these early visits that she observed that the school type, rather than location was the main distinguishing factor among the schools with regard to language use and preferences. Consequently, the sample for the present study consisted of 36 randomly selected schools from the different locations, broken down into 20 private pre-primary and primary schools, 11 public, and 5 faith-based schools. The list of the schools is contained in the Appendix.

### **7. Methods and Instruments**

Preliminary visits to schools were undertaken by the researcher between October and December, 2005. The main study then took place between March and April, 2006. A descriptive survey design was used, involving a questionnaire



administered to head teachers and other teachers in each of the thirty-six schools, oral interview with these school personnel, as well as observation of pupils in and outside of the classroom. The researcher was assisted by an able assistant in the conduct of the survey.

## 8. Results

### 8.1 Questionnaire

The findings from the questionnaire are displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: *Language Use and Preferences in Nursery and Primary Schools in Lagos Metropolis*

| S/<br>N | Type of school                                                          | Private schools |            | Public schools |            | Faith-based schools |            | Total all schools. |            |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|----------------|------------|---------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|
|         |                                                                         | 20              | %<br>(100) | 11             | %<br>(100) | 5                   | %<br>(100) | 36                 | %<br>(100) |
| 1       | Number and percentage of respondents                                    |                 |            |                |            |                     |            |                    |            |
|         | Which languages are taught in the following classes?                    |                 |            |                |            |                     |            |                    |            |
|         | A. Nursery 1-3 English                                                  | 20              | 100        | 11             | 100        | 5                   | 100        | 36                 | 100        |
|         | Yoruba                                                                  | 4               | 20         | 4              | 36.36      | 2                   | 40         | 10                 | 27.77      |
|         | French                                                                  | 7               | 35         | -              | -          | 1                   | 20         | 8                  | 22.22      |
|         | Igbo                                                                    | 1               | 5          | -              | -          | -                   | -          | 1                  | 2.77       |
|         | Hausa                                                                   | 1               | 5          | -              | -          | -                   | -          | 1                  | 2.77       |
|         | Others (specify): Arabic                                                |                 |            |                |            | 2                   | 40         | 2                  | 5.55       |
|         | B. Primaries 1-3                                                        |                 |            |                |            |                     |            |                    |            |
|         | English                                                                 | 20              | 100        | 11             | 100        | 5                   | 100        | 36                 | 100        |
|         | Yoruba                                                                  | 12              | 60         | 5              | 45.45      | 2                   | 40         | 19                 | 52.77      |
|         | French                                                                  | 16              | 80         | 1              | 9          | 1                   | 20         | 18                 | 50         |
|         | Igbo                                                                    | 1               | 5          |                |            |                     |            | 1                  | 2.77       |
|         | Hausa                                                                   | 1               | 5          |                |            |                     |            | 1                  | 2.77       |
|         | Others (specify): Arabic                                                |                 |            |                |            | 1                   | 20         | 1                  | 2.77       |
|         | C. Primaries 4-6                                                        |                 |            |                |            |                     |            |                    |            |
|         | English                                                                 | 20              | 100        | 11             | 100        | 5                   | 100        | 36                 | 100        |
|         | Yoruba                                                                  | 12              | 60         | 5              | 45.45      | 2                   | 40         | 19                 | 52.77      |
|         | French                                                                  | 15              | 75         | 2              | 18.18      | 1                   | 20         | 18                 | 50         |
|         | Igbo                                                                    | 1               | 5          |                |            |                     |            | 1                  | 2.77       |
| 2.      | Hausa                                                                   | 1               | 5          |                |            |                     |            | 1                  | 2.77       |
|         | Others (specify): Arabic                                                |                 |            |                |            | 1                   | 20         | 1                  | 2.77       |
|         | Which language(s) is/are used to teach pupils in the following classes: |                 |            |                |            |                     |            |                    |            |
|         | A. Nursery 1-3                                                          |                 |            |                |            |                     |            |                    |            |
|         | English                                                                 | 20              | 100        | 11             | 100        | 5                   | 100        | 36                 | 100        |
|         | Yoruba                                                                  | 2               | 10         | 1              | 9.09       | 1                   | 20         | 4                  | 11.11      |
|         | Pidgin English                                                          | 1               | 5          | 2              | 18.18      | -                   | -          | 3                  | 8.33       |
|         | Others (specify): Igbo                                                  | 1               | -          | -              | -          | -                   | -          | -                  | -          |
|         | Arabic                                                                  | -               | -          | -              | -          | 1                   | 20         | 2                  | 5.55       |
|         | B. Primaries 1-3                                                        |                 |            |                |            |                     |            |                    |            |
|         | English                                                                 | 20              | 100        | 11             | 100        | 5                   | 100        | 36                 | 100        |
|         | Yoruba                                                                  | 4               | 20         | 2              | 18.18      | 1                   | 20         | 7                  | 19.44      |
|         | Pidgin English                                                          | -               | -          | 1              | 9.09       | -                   | -          | 1                  | 2.77       |



|    |                                                                                                                                                      |    |     |    |       |   |     |    |       |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|-----|----|-------|---|-----|----|-------|
|    | Others (specify): Igbo                                                                                                                               | 1  | 5   | -  |       | - | -   | 1  | 2.77  |
|    | C. Primaries 4-6                                                                                                                                     |    |     |    |       |   |     |    |       |
|    | English                                                                                                                                              | 20 | 100 | 11 | 100   | 5 | 100 | 36 | 100   |
|    | Yoruba                                                                                                                                               | 5  | 25  | 2  | 18.18 | 1 | 20  | 8  | 22.22 |
|    | Pidgin English                                                                                                                                       | -  | -   | -  | -     | - | -   | -  | -     |
|    | Others (specify): Igbo                                                                                                                               | 1  | 5   | -  |       | - | -   | -  | 2.77  |
| 3. | Is speaking of indigenous Languages banned in the School?:                                                                                           |    |     |    |       |   |     |    |       |
|    | Yes                                                                                                                                                  | 12 | 60  | 3  | 27.3  | 3 | 60  | 18 | 50    |
|    | No                                                                                                                                                   | 8  | 40  | 8  | 72.7  | 2 | 40  | 18 | 50    |
| 4. | Does the school have indigenous cultural and creative programmes?:                                                                                   |    |     |    |       |   |     |    |       |
|    | Yes                                                                                                                                                  | 14 | 70  | 9  | 81.8  | 4 | 80  | 27 | 75    |
|    | No                                                                                                                                                   | 6  | 30  | 2  | 81.8  | 1 | 20  | 9  | 25    |
| 5. | From your observation, What proportion of the children in your school are able to speak their parent's indigenous language?:                         |    |     |    |       |   |     |    |       |
|    | All                                                                                                                                                  | 3  | 15  | 1  | 9.10  | 2 | 40  | 6  | 16.67 |
|    | About Half                                                                                                                                           | 4  | 20  | 5  | 45.5  | 1 | 20  | 10 | 27.78 |
|    | Very Few                                                                                                                                             | 13 | 65  | 5  | 45.5  | 2 | 40  | 20 | 55.55 |
|    | None                                                                                                                                                 | -  | -   | -  | -     | - | -   | -  | -     |
| 6. | Are you aware of the provisions of the NPE (1977, revised 2004 ed.) on use of LI as medium & teaching them as subjects in nursery & primary school?: |    |     |    |       |   |     |    |       |
|    | Yes                                                                                                                                                  | 16 | 80  | 11 | 100   | 2 | 40  | 29 | 80.56 |
|    | No                                                                                                                                                   | 4  | 20  | -  | -     | 3 | 60  | 7  | 19.44 |
| 7. | Do you see a link between the learning & use of indigenous languages by children & the survival of these languages?:                                 |    |     |    |       |   |     |    |       |
|    | Yes                                                                                                                                                  | 16 | 80  | 11 | 100   | 4 | 80  | 31 | 86.11 |
|    | No                                                                                                                                                   | 4  | 20  | -  | -     | 1 | 20  | 5  | 13.89 |
| 8. | Indicate constraints/ difficulties militating against the use and teaching of indigenous languages in nursery and primary schools                    |    |     |    |       |   |     |    |       |
|    | (a) the school prefers to assist pupils to learn English well.                                                                                       | 15 | 75  | 7  | 63.63 | 5 | 100 | 27 | 75    |
|    | (b) parents do not favour                                                                                                                            | 10 | 50  | 7  | 63.63 | 2 | 40  | 19 | 52.77 |

|     |                                                                                                                                            |    |    |    |       |   |     |    |       |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|-------|---|-----|----|-------|
|     | the teaching of indigenous languages to their children.                                                                                    |    |    |    |       |   |     |    |       |
| (c) | The classes contain children from different language backgrounds.                                                                          | 17 | 85 | 10 | 90.90 | 5 | 100 | 32 | 88.88 |
| (d) | The school lacks trained teachers that are able to teach the indigenous languages and use them as medium.                                  | 10 | 50 | 3  | 27.27 | 2 | 40  | 15 | 41.66 |
| (e) | There is lack of indigenous languages textbooks and other instructional materials.                                                         | 9  | 45 | 8  | 72.72 | 2 | 40  | 13 | 36.11 |
| (f) | Indigenous languages lack adequate words and expressions to make them usable as media of instruction.                                      | 8  | 40 | 6  | 54.54 | 3 | 60  | 17 | 47.22 |
| (g) | The government does not give adequate financial and moral support to the teaching and use of indigenous languages in school.               | 13 | 65 | 8  | 72.72 | 3 | 60  | 24 | 66.66 |
| (h) | The general Nigerian public does not give adequate moral and financial support to the teaching and use of indigenous languages in schools. | 17 | 85 | 9  | 81.81 | 3 | 60  | 29 | 80.55 |

## 8.2 Oral Interview with Head Teachers and other Teachers

During oral interview and in their written suggestions, the school personnel expressed sorrow that Nigerian languages and cultures are fast dying. Their overwhelming opinion, however, was that the blame laid primarily with parents who are failing to bring up their children to speak their indigenous language. The teachers suggested as follows:

- Charity should begin at home. Parents should bring up their children to speak their indigenous language and also use the language at home;
- The government should enforce the provisions of the NPE, making it compulsory for all pre-primary and primary schools, be they public or private, to teach Nigerian languages;
- The schools should also teach and practice Nigerian cultural and creative arts;
- The relevant arms of the Federal and State Ministries of Education should design suitable pre-primary and primary school curriculum for indigenous languages;

- The government should massively train teachers for the country's indigenous languages;
- Books and other instructional materials such as cassettes, recorded CDs, films, videos etc. should be made available in local languages;
- The schools should establish Nigerian languages clubs, dance and other cultural groups who will participate actively in language and cultural events, e.g. on National/Independence/Children's Day ceremonies;
- Prizes and other incentives should be given for good performances in Nigerian languages and cultures- either academically or in practical performances, and
- The churches and mosques should also encourage the use of indigenous languages in some of their children's programmes and activities.

### 8.3 Observation of Pupils

The classes observed were invariably conducted in English with the odd explanation in Yoruba, Pidgin English or, in one or two cases, in Igbo or Hausa. In some of the schools, a lot of rote learning and recitation took place with little or no practical work, plays and games. The most alarming is what transpires in some of the pre-primary institutions where teachers that have not been trained to handle the development of children below the age of 5 years have seen their task as conducting a lower level of primary school. Consequently, most of the activities consist of learning to read and write in English, reciting nursery rhymes and singing songs in English, as well as learning the rudiments of numbers and figures. Outside the classroom, the children mostly communicated with one another in English or Pidgin English. When spoken to in an indigenous language, they generally became embarrassed, while a few replied in English. One left the schools depressed about the steady "Europeanization" of the Nigerian child that is going on in the country's pre-primary and primary institutions.

## 9. Discussion

### 9.1. Medium of Instruction in Pre-primary and Primary Schools

Twenty-seven (27) nursery and primary schools in the survey use English exclusively as medium while the remaining 9 schools use a mixture of English and Yoruba, or English and Pidgin English. Clearly, this is in contravention of the provisions of the National Policy on Education as well as against the numerous research findings which show that the use of the child's own language in early childhood education has tremendous cognitive and affective advantages over the use of a foreign medium. It is to be noted also that Nigeria and other African countries remain the region of the world where most children are educated in a foreign language, as shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Access to Instruction in the Mother-tongue in Different Regions of the World in Year 2000**

| <i>Region or Group</i>    | <i>No. of Languages Spoken</i> | <i>Population with Access to instruction In the Mother-tongue</i> | <i>Total Population in Millions</i> |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Sub-Saharan Africa        | 2632                           | 13%                                                               | 641                                 |
| East Asia and the Pacific | 2815                           | 62%                                                               | 1918                                |

|                                 |      |     |       |
|---------------------------------|------|-----|-------|
| South Asia                      | 811  | 66% | 1,480 |
| Central and East Europe and CIS | 625  | 74% | 409   |
| OECD countries                  | 1299 | 87% | 912   |
| Latin America and the Caribbean | 1086 | 91% | 530   |

Source: *SIL International 2004, cited in UNDP 2004, p. 34.*

## **9.2 Languages Taught in Pre-Primary and Primary Schools**

English is taught in all nursery and primary classes in the 36 schools surveyed; Yoruba is taught in nursery 1-3 in 8 schools and in primaries 1-6 in 19 schools. Considering that Lagos is a pre-dominantly Yoruba area, this record is poor. Igbo and Hausa are taught in nursery and primary classes in one school, a private school located in Yaba, a middle income area. The real surprise is the rapid expansion of French in both nursery and primary schools with the subject being taught in nursery 1-3 in 8 schools and in primaries 1-6 in 18 schools. The surprise stems from the fact that French was included in the primary school curriculum only in the 1998 revised edition of the NPE which prescribed that it be taught from primary 4. So, why have the schools rushed to introduce French even in nursery and lower primary classes? The answer lies in the well-known penchant of the Nigerian 'elite' to seek every avenue to "whitewash" and "Europeanise" themselves and their children. Thus, a big selling point of many of the private schools is to teach French in addition to English, to further underline the fact that their school is "international".

## **9.3 Globalization and Multilingualism**

There is no denying the fact that as the world becomes more and more a global village, the individual would need more than his own language to function outside his community. This is why the language policies of many countries require that the child learns his own mother-tongue and another language of wider communication (lwc). The UNESCO, in fact, recommends a trilingual policy for multilingual countries:

- (a) An international language which enables the individual to participate in world economy and other world networks (e.g. English or French in former colonial territories).
- (b) A lingual franca, i.e. a local language which facilitates communication among people speaking different languages in the country (e.g. Swahili in East Africa)
- (c) A mother-tongue. (UNDP 2004 p. 60)

In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (1977) actually had the above trilingual policy where English was the language of wider communication; Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba were lingual francas; while the country's 394 indigenous languages were the mother tongues. True, the Nigerian languages provisions have not been successfully implemented, but the imposition of a fourth language, French, as core primary and secondary school subject since 1998 has further

receded the chances of any of the Nigerian Languages and mother tongues to be taught in schools.

#### **9.4 Population of pupils who speak their parents' ancestral languages**

In the 36 schools, the proportion of children who are able to speak their parents' indigenous languages ranged from about half (27.78%) to very few (5.55%). Thus, about 80% of the pupils are hardly competent in their ancestral languages. The failure of the schools to assist pupils to learn and to use their indigenous languages borders on the violation of their linguistic human rights.

#### **9.5 Banning of the speaking of Nigerian Languages in schools**

While 3 out of 11 public schools (27%) banned the speaking of 'vernacular' as much as 12 out of 20 private schools (60%) did so. The word 'vernacular' comes from the Latin root 'vernaculus' meaning 'native'; it is thus a language of the soil, native to a region or country. A situation where Nigerian children are banned from speaking their native languages in their own country can only lead to negative affective outcomes both for them and their country. As one observes these children in their schools, it becomes patently clear that they are internalizing a feeling of inferiority about themselves, their language and culture, and indeed about everything Nigerian. The schools ought to heed the advice contained in the UNDP Human Development Report, 2004 p.1 which notes that "Cultural liberty is an essential element of human development ... individuals wish to be free to practice their religion openly, speak their language, celebrate their ethnic or religious heritage, without fear of ridicule, of punishment or of the diminishing of their chances".

#### **9.6 Perceiving a Link between the Learning and Use of the Indigenous Languages by Children and the Survival of these Languages**

As much as 86% of the teachers surveyed said they saw a link between the learning and use of indigenous languages by children and the longterm survival of these languages. They, however, felt there was not much the schools could do because of some important constraints and difficulties, such as:

- The mixed nature of classes, with children coming from different ethno-linguistic backgrounds;
- The general lack of moral or financial support for Nigerian languages in schools from the public, parents and the government;
- The preference of the schools to assist pupils to learn English, first and foremost;
- Lack of books and other instructional materials, and
- Lack of trained teachers, capable of teaching Nigerian Languages and using them to teach

The schools cannot, however, be excused from this Pontius Pilate-like posture. Their role includes that of proactive agents of change and positive development, including language and cultural transmission and promotion.



### **9.7 An African Perspective: The African Academy of Languages (ACALAN)**

This paper began with a quote from a Mozambican woman, lamenting her inability to find a crèche for her baby where mother-tongue features in the school programme. The marginalization of indigenous African languages in schools, and the march of these languages towards extinction is one that raises concern all over the continent. Thus, in July 2001, Heads of States and governments of the African Union took a decision to create the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), with headquarters in Bamako, Mali. According to Adama Samassekou, President of ACALAN (LEAP News July 2005 p.7), the Academy has three main functions:

- to advise states about language policy;
- to have a coordinating function concerning all language-related activities, and
- to be a centre for disseminating of information about language and language-related issues in Africa.

The establishment of ACALAN is one that deserves to be applauded by all Africans. However, it needs to be adequately supported with the right moral, financial and political will by all African governments and peoples, so that it can make the right impact on the continent's language scene. Regrettably, so far, the ACALAN is hardly known in Nigeria and as the year runs out, not even ACALAN's first stated project which is the declaration of year 2006 as the **Year of African Languages** has been heard of in many quarters in Nigeria, let alone make an impact.

## **10. Conclusion and Food for Thought**

### **10.1 Conclusion**

This study has shown that most of the pre-primary and primary schools within the Lagos metropolis are neither using the mother-tongue to teach nor do they bother to teach Nigerian languages as subjects. In the first place, this denies the pupils of the knowledge of the wealth of their languages and cultures that have been developed and used for centuries and even millennia. Secondly, it is steadily destroying the self-respect and atavistic identity of the children, while trying to replace it with a phony 'oyibo' or 'European' identity. The third and most serious consequence is that it is steadily leading to the death of indigenous languages. If the present trend and practices are not halted, then the bulk of the country's over four hundred indigenous languages would have been extinct in the next fifty years or so.

### **10.2 Food for Thought**

It is pointless here to make any prescriptive recommendations since such suggestions from diverse quarters given in the past 80 years have not been heeded by Nigeria and her peoples. This paper will therefore content itself with raising a few questions, as food for thought:

- i. Do Nigerians consider themselves as human beings created by God equally as other human beings?

- ii. Do Nigerians agree that their languages are invaluable cultural heritages which have not only served them adequately as a means of communication for centuries and millennia, but have also preserved their histories, customs, ideas, ideals and identities from across the ages?
- iii. Do Nigerians understand that their languages are fast dying?
- iv. Do Nigerians want their languages and cultures to die?
- v. Are Nigerians willing to undergo the fundamental paradigm and mental shift which will underlie measures to halt the demise of their languages and cultures?
- vi. Is the Nigerian government willing to make a comprehensive **National Language Policy** concerning all domains of life - education, governance, the constitution, the judiciary, etc?
- vii. Are Nigerians willing to work with other African countries and the rest of the world towards the preservation, protection and promotion of our collective linguistic and cultural heritage?

Answers to these questions will dictate the next steps to take.

### Abbreviations

|        |                                                                   |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CIS    | Commonwealth of Independent States                                |
| NPE    | National Policy on Education                                      |
| OECP   | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development             |
| SIL    | Studies in Linguistics                                            |
| UNDP   | United Nations Development Programme                              |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. |

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**Appendix****List of Pre-Primary and Primary Schools Used in the Study**

The researcher would like to express her gratitude for the cooperation received from the underlisted schools during the survey.

**A. Private Schools**

All Sufficient Grace Academy, Araromi  
Amena Model Nursery and Primary School, Olodi-Apapa  
Child Pride Nursery and Primary School, Abule Oja, Yaba  
Corona Day Nursery, Ikoyi  
Corona School, Ikoyi  
Corporate Kids Academy, Ikoyi  
Crescent Nursery/Primary School, Victoria Island  
Diamonds Private School, Dolphin Estate, Ikoyi  
Gloryville School, Ebute-Metta, Lagos  
Happy Days School, Dolphin Estate, Ikoyi  
Home Science Association Nursery/Primary School, Ikoyi  
Moonlight Nursery and Primary School, Olodi, Apapa  
Pinewood Private School, Dolphin Estate, Ikoyi  
Presbyterian Nursery/Primary School, Makoko, Yaba  
Solid Foundation Children School, Olodi-Apapa  
Tala Nursery and Primary School, Makoko, Yaba  
The Childville, Yaba  
University of Lagos Staff School, Akoka, Yaba  
University of Lagos Women Society Nursery and Primary School, Akoka, Yaba  
Update Nursery/Primary School, Olodi-Apapa.

**B. Public Schools**

All Saints Anglican Primary School, yaba  
Anglican Primary School, Araromi  
Army Children School, Bonny Camp, Victoria Island  
Bonny Camp Primary School, Victoria Island  
Command Children's School, Yaba  
Command Children's School, Bonny Cantonment, Victoria Island  
Federal Housing Estate Primary School, 1004 Flats, Victoria Island  
Hope Primary School, Ikoyi  
Saint George's Girls' Primary School, Falomo, Ikoyi  
St. John Primary School, Olodi- Apapa  
Wowo Primary School, Olodi-Apapa

**C. Faith-Based Schools**

Akorede Islamic Foundation School, Olodi-Apapa  
A. U.D. Primary School, Ebute-Metta  
Nuru Islam Arabic School, Ebute Metta  
Resurrection Day Care, Nursery and Primary School, 1004 Flats, Victoria Island  
Zion International Nursery/Primary School, Araromi.



## **4. Language Use in the Nigerian Educational System: Problems and Prospects**

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### **1. Introduction**

There are no official figures for the number of the languages spoken in Nigeria. It is believed that there could be up to 450 languages spoken by the 130 million or so people that make up the population of Nigeria. Some of these languages, specifically Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba are each spoken by no less than 10 million people, while some at the other end of the spectrum are spoken by a few hundred or thousand people.

The complexity of the nation's linguistic situation continues to pose a great challenge to both education policy making and implementation. There is evidence from research that children learn better in their mother tongue (MT) in the early years of education (UNESCO, 2003). A number of Nigerian educationists and linguists such have been advocating the use of the indigenous languages as media of instruction (MI) in the first few years of primary education. The Federal Government, through its white papers, has likewise sanctioned the use of MT education at the lower primary. But, sadly, the implementation has remained intractable, with some schools notably in the rural areas using the some indigenous languages while some are not. One effect of this lack of uniformity is that while some pupils have the opportunity to learn in their MT, albeit for a short period, others do not enjoy such a privilege. Another is that as long as the MTs remain undeveloped, English will continue to be used as an indispensable MI while the MTs will have little or no role to play in the country's educational system.

This paper examines some of the issues in language use in the Nigerian educational system with particular reference to language use at the lower levels of education. It notes the missing link between policy formulation and implementation, and especially the lack of clarity in the way the medium of instruction is supposed to operate in multilingual settings. It concludes that unless attempts are made to promote the indigenous languages as MI, their role in education will be getting increasingly insignificant as English continues to enjoy its functional role as MI in education, and in the worst case scenario, their non-use might eventually spell their death sentence.

### **2. The Linguistic Map of Nigeria**

Nigeria is complex not only demographically, but also linguistically. While some languages can boast of several million speakers, others have just a few hundred.



Apart from the indigenous languages, there are a few foreign languages that also feature in the Nigerian educational system. For the purposes of this analysis, all the languages are divided into two broad categories, namely indigenous and foreign. The indigenous languages in turn can be sub-divided into major and minor languages.

#### **a) The Indigenous Languages**

The dichotomy used to be between the three major languages, namely Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, on the one hand, and the minor languages on the other. The Nigerian Constitution has always accorded semi-official status to these three big ones probably because the number of their speakers is more than half the country's population. The dichotomy is, however, misleading because the languages that are grouped together as minority languages actually vary in size. Also, according to Odejide (1992), the creation of states elevated some of them from being minor languages to state languages. Languages such as Edo, Efik, Ibibio, Tiv, Igala, Kanuri, Nupe and Fulfulde were used in state broadcasts and on the national radio network. Like the three major languages, they are also taught as subjects in early primary in the states in which they are spoken. The situation is even more intricate now that the division of the country into 36 states cuts across linguistic boundaries as a result of which speakers of some of these languages have been separated politically.

Although Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) does not enjoy the kind of constitutional recognition which the other indigenous language enjoy, it is no doubt a force to reckon with when it comes to its wide use as a viable means of communication that rivals that of any of the major indigenous languages and even English, and as MT to about 1 million or more people in Edo and Delta states and their environs. Despite the ambivalent attitude to it by educated people (Jibrin, 1995; Egbokhare, 2001), it remains a viable means of communication that cuts across ethnic boundaries. It is more widely used in the South than in the North, though it is found in Kano, Jos, Zaria and Kaduna, all in the north. But despite its widespread use, it has not found a place in the educational system. The reasons are not far-fetched. NPE has no official status, and is often disparaged because it has no standard orthography. It is, however, a language that many students who speak it would use outside the classroom.

The influence of NPE on the English used in schools cannot be ruled out given that both students and teachers speak it. This is similar to the fear being entertained in Kenya about the influence of the burgeoning Sheng on the English language. If, however, English is taught and learnt effectively, which in my opinion is not the case, those who use both English and NPE would be able to keep the two grammars apart so that one does not interfere with the learning of the other.

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**b) Foreign Languages**

In this category, three languages may be recognized, namely French, Arabic, and English. French is taught in the different levels of the Nigerian educational system though not in a consistent manner, in some early childhood schools (what some refer to as nurseries or kindergartens), primary schools, the first few years at the secondary schools, and as a degree course in many universities. Arabic is taught only in Muslim and unity schools and in some universities.

English is the most important of the three because it is the official language of Nigeria for the purposes of government and administration. This is the experience of many African countries formerly governed by Britain. It is interesting to note that since the colonialists introduced it, its use has not diminished despite opposition to its continued use as the official language. Apart from being the language of administration, commerce, the mass media and wider communication, it is an invaluable MI, in most cases, from upper primary upwards. It is also an important subject at all levels of education which students are required to pass to gain admission to secondary and tertiary institutions. Its continued use in education as MI is due, in part, to the multilingual nature of Nigeria, and the absence of a national language. Its attraction as a widely sought-after MI is also due to the fact that it is 'a developed language with a rich literature as well as scientific and technical vocabulary' (Bogonko, 1992, p. 246). This is what is lacking with many of the indigenous languages. The three major languages, namely Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba may be said to be fairly developed given the amount of literary and linguistic works in them, but they are still far from being developed compared to English.

Given this kind of complexity that characterizes the linguistic situation in Nigeria, the challenges facing the implementation of education in the MTs is, to say the least, a daunting one. But the challenges are not impossible to tackle.

**3. Language Use in the Educational System**

The educational system in Nigeria has undergone several changes since its inception. Successive governments have toyed with different systems mainly to score political points. Currently, there are four tiers of education: early childhood (which is not funded by government), primary, secondary, and tertiary. Language use is variable in the system, and what follows attempt to highlight this.

**Pre-Primary Education**

In Nigeria, before a child begins primary education, he or she may have the opportunity of attending pre-primary school (known as kindergarten and nursery). At this level, many children in the rural areas are taught mainly in the MT and may just have English as a subject. Those in the urban areas, by contrast, are exposed to English as a subject and as MI. Many of them may have started using English at home before they come to school. Parents of such children value early exposure to English because they believe it would have some academic advantage for their children (Adekunle, 1995).

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Pre-primary education is generally not part of the formal school system and is not funded by the government. It is left to communities, churches or individuals to run as they wish. The implication is that at entry point into primary schools in Nigeria, children come in with different exposures to English and to the indigenous languages. This paper is calling for a uniform policy even at this level that would ensure that all children are given equal opportunities to learn in the most effective way.

### **Primary Schools**

Primary education is six years, and begins at the age of six. Some children especially in the rural areas would not have had any contact with formal education or English when they begin school if they have not attended pre-primary school. There is, however, no uniformity in use of MI in primary schools. Many schools in urban areas use the English MI from the onset because children in one class may come from different linguistic backgrounds. In many of these schools the indigenous languages may be taught as subjects. In the rural areas, the tendency to use the MT as MI is high. English is also taught as a subject whether or not it is used as MI. In some parts of the country, the MI may not be the child's first language. In Jos area, for instance, Hausa is used in the lower primary rather than the indigenous languages, largely because the teachers and the children speak different MTs. By the time the English MI is introduced, it comes too late for the children because of the dominance of the language of the immediate environment (LIC), in this case, Hausa. This example, given by Adekunle (1995) can be generalized to the urban areas such as Lagos where multilingualism is the norm.

### **Secondary Schools**

There are two levels of secondary education: three years of junior secondary, and three years of senior secondary. English is the MI for both levels, and is taught as two subjects: literature and English language. Literature is compulsory at the junior secondary after which it becomes an elective. English language is compulsory at both levels of education. A credit is now mandatory at the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) as a requirement for admissions into tertiary institutions. Some indigenous languages are offered as subjects; the minor languages up to the junior level and the major ones up to SSSCE level. In junior secondary, although the pupils are required to learn two indigenous languages, in practice, they learn only one. When it comes to language use outside the formal school system, students at the two levels of secondary education are more likely to use their MTs or NPE more often than they would use English.

### **Tertiary Institutions**

At the tertiary level of education, English is the MI for all subjects, except perhaps for the foreign and indigenous languages that are offered as courses. English is also studied as a course of study. A high level of proficiency in English is

expected at this level, but this is far from the reality. The lack of adequate linguistic competence for work in tertiary institutions has prompted the introduction of the Use of English and Communication in English courses as remedial/developmental programmes for first year students to improve their communication skills in English (Oladipo & Gachari, 2005). Some indigenous languages such as Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo are offered as courses at undergraduate and higher degree levels in many tertiary institutions in the country. Outside the academic milieu, the language situation is not drastically different from that for secondary school students where the use of English is drastically reduced, and students are more likely to use NPE or any of the indigenous languages with their peers or even their lecturers.

From the profile of the educational system presented thus far, it is obvious that English occupies a more important position in education than any of the indigenous languages. This dominant position, as noted by Sure (2000), can threaten the survival of the indigenous languages and can lead to linguicide. Not only does this deny children the right to acquire linguistic skills in their languages, but it also gives a wrong impression that English is superior to the indigenous languages.

#### **4. The National Policy on Education**

In an attempt to address the challenges posed by multilingualism, the government has made policy statements on language use in education. These are contained in the National Policy on Education (1981, revised) with special language policy statements in the Federal Republic of Nigeria Constitution (1979) and the Political Bureau Report (1987). The following excerpts are sections of the policy on language use.

##### **Section 1 Paragraph 8**

In addition to appreciating the importance of language in the education process and as a means of preserving the people's culture, the Government considers it to be in the interest of national unity that each child should be encouraged to learn one of the three major languages other than his own mother tongue. In this connection, the government considers the three main languages in Nigeria to be Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

##### **Section 2 Paragraph 7**

The medium of instruction in pre primary schools should be the language of the immediate community. In a multi-national school, English may be used as the medium of instruction, but the language of the immediate community should be taught in the spoken form.

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**Section 3 Paragraph 15 (4)**

Government will see to it that the medium of instruction in the primary school is initially the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community, and at a later stage English.

**5. Research-based Language Projects**

Akere (1995) records three projects which were carried out between 1971 and 1977 in some Nigerian Universities 'which were designed to test, through empirical/experimental research, some of the assumptions that informed the several recommendations of educational language policies for Nigeria' (p. 182). These projects have been variously reported in publications such as Omojuwa (1980), Afolayan (1976), Fafunwa et al. (1980).

One of these projects was the Primary Education Improvement Project (PEIP) in the north of Nigeria in which Hausa was used as MI where it was dominant and English was taught as a subject in the first three years. From primary four to six, English was used as MI and Hausa was taught as a subject where there was no dominant indigenous language. The project recorded some success. Unfortunately, the project could not be sustained because of lack of funds.

Another was the much acclaimed Ife Six-Year Primary Project of the then University of Ife which was designed to demonstrate that children would perform better if taught in the MT. The experimental group was taught all subjects except English in Yoruba medium from primaries one to six. At the end of the project it was found that children in the experimental group showed better competence in English in all the other subjects on the curriculum than those in the control group. The project suffered the same fate as the PEIP.

The third research was the Rivers State Reader Project pioneered by the University of Port Harcourt. It involved the use of the indigenous languages in Rivers State to teach children to learn and read first in their MTs before they learnt English. The project resulted in the production of about twenty school readers. But despite the enthusiasm the project aroused in the development of the indigenous languages, the objective of the project was not realized as a result of teachers' attitude. Most teachers preferred to teach English rather than the indigenous languages probably because they lacked expertise in the indigenous languages.

Being sponsored projects the successes recorded are not surprising. If they were to be implemented nationwide the results would have been different.

There are also other research findings that corroborate the theory that children should be taught in their MTs in pre-primary and early primary education. Maori children in New Zealand who were taught in their MT performed better than those taught in English. A longitudinal study in the State of Virginia in the USA also links good academic performance to bilingual education (UNESCO, 2003). The importance of MT education has prompted UNESCO to declare 21 February of every year as the International Mother Language Day. Bogonko (1992) also notes that European children learn in their MT throughout their education, which enables them to express themselves more confidently in



their languages that are natural to them. There is also evidence that many developed countries especially USA, Israel, New Zealand and South Africa are modifying their language policies to incorporate minor languages in their educational systems (Oladipo & Kiambi, 2006). It is, therefore, clear that education in the MT, especially in the early stages of education is beneficial to the child, and, consequently should be pursued vigorously so that the benefits that accrue from it can bring the much needed improvements to the Nigerian educational system.

## **6. Implementation Problems**

Adekunle (1995) notes that any policy formation must take cognizance of factors, such as social feasibility with clearly defined attainable objectives and a well-defined programme to facilitate attainment of the objectives, if it must succeed.

The opening statement of Section 1 paragraph 8 clearly shows that the government recognizes the importance of language in the educational process. But as was noted earlier, the secondary role assigned to language is an indication that the important role of language as the means of imparting education is inadvertently overlooked. The policy also sees the use of language in education as a means of preserving the culture of the people and promoting national unity. While this might be legitimate at one level, it shows that the government is more concerned with national unity and culture preservation than with the kind of education children receive in school. Again, how these aims are to be reached are not specified. As Adekunle remarks, 'The means for achieving the goals did not take into consideration the sociolinguistic habits of the target community and the social interactional bases for language policy formation' (1995, p. 68).

The prominence that is given to the three major languages also raises some issues. The assumption is that the knowledge of at least one of them is essential for speakers of other indigenous languages. Negative reaction to such a policy cannot be ruled out. The then Banda government in Malawi advocated a similar policy. The choice of Chichewa as the National language did not go down well with speakers of the other 14 or so indigenous languages who felt discriminated against and marginalized (Moto, 2000). In the light of such negative reactions, the issue of language choice in multilingual nations requires serious consideration because of its sensitive nature. Governments should therefore weigh the options and make informed decisions that would not threaten the existence of the other languages.

The implementation of the teaching of the three major languages is also fraught with difficulty. Those who speak any of the three major languages as MT do not have as much choice than to study their MTs because in many schools only one indigenous language is studied because there are no teachers for the other indigenous languages. Those for whom the three major languages are not MTs have to compete with those who speak them as MTs. Needless to say that they will be disadvantaged. A related problem is how much of these three languages



students, especially the latter group, can learn within the period they have to learn them as subjects.

It is also obvious that the policy on the use of MT or LIC appears to have overlooked the sheer number of languages spoken in the country. If this policy were to be implemented to the letter, it would mean training adequately qualified teachers in all these languages as well as providing materials for teaching them that is assuming that they all have written forms. The fact is, more than half have not been reduced to writing. For such languages, policy implementation is inapplicable. The problem of implementation is compounded by the fact that in the urban areas, there is no common indigenous language which all children speak. Even where there is, children have different levels of competency in the language. In addition, many teachers may not speak the LIC. In such cases, it would be difficult to insist on using the MT or the LIC.

Section 3 par 15 (4) does not indicate how the government is going to ensure the implementation of MT in the primary school. In practice, different schools implement what is convenient for them. While some schools in the rural areas use the MT up to primary three, some use it together with English up to primary six. Some others do not use it at all, particularly, in the urban areas, where, as was noted earlier, multilingualism poses a challenge to the use of the MTs as MI. This lack of uniformity is likely to have different end results.

Given the number of languages spoken in Nigeria, we are faced with a number of questions. In the first place, how flexible can the government policy be on the issue of medium since the government is the unifying factor in education? Can the nation afford specialist teachers and provide materials in the languages, given the ever-increasing stringent measures on funding? What is the future of the languages that have not been reduced to writing? I believe that an attempt to address these questions would help redefine the place of language in the educational system.

Finally, there is problem with the use of English as MI and as a subject on the curriculum. Since there is no indigenous language at present that can serve as MI, English will continue in that role for a long time to come. The problem with the use of English as MI is the lack of uniformity in the way it is used. This, as I see it, has some consequences for the educational system. What it means is that some children are more exposed to the use of English as MI than some others. Obviously, the results cannot be the same. The current low-level competence in English, which has been noted by many scholars, might not be unconnected with this discrepancy. It might also be an indication of the ineffective teaching/learning of English within the educational system. The situation calls for concerted effort from all the players in the educational system.

## **7. Proposals for Consideration**

As has been noted earlier in this paper, there are problems with the language policy itself as well as with the implementation of the policy. But if there is a political will, the problems could be addressed systematically.

One way out of this quagmire is for the government and policy makers to have clearly-stated language policies that would take into cognizance the socio-cultural realities of its people. As Bogonko (1992, p. 236) notes, 'culture, education and language are interrelated and no policy on the one can have meaning without the other'. It is equally important that such policies should thus be backed by strong political will that would ensure implementation irrespective of who is in power.

Since as we have seen, students are not getting anywhere with learning the major languages, effort should be redirected to consolidating the implementation of education in the MT. Materials can be developed in the various MTs and teachers trained to address the non-availability of these and improve on what exists in languages that have made some progress in these areas. Efforts should also be made to see that languages that do not exist in writing are eventually reduced to writing.

Some countries that are linguistically complex though not to the same extent as Nigeria are attempting to address the problem of implementation of education in MT by coming up with national languages, such as Kiswahili in some East African countries. While this is not the best solution in that national languages can kill off the other indigenous languages, nevertheless, it ensures that children learn in an indigenous language that is common to them. The issue of a national language for Nigeria has been debated without success and so might not be a solution that could be explored. It would therefore be prudent to focus attention on how the MTs could be utilized at the lower levels of education.

While the indigenous languages are being developed, there is also the need to rethink how English is used and taught in the schools. Currently, the products of the Nigerian educational systems do not demonstrate a competence in it that indicates that it is being handled efficiently. The quality of its teaching and learning can be improved through proper training of teachers of English and relevant materials for its learning to justify its role as an invaluable MI.

## **8. Conclusion**

This paper has attempted to highlight the way in which language is used in the Nigerian educational system. The indigenous languages score low in their role within the educational system. The current situation appears to paint a gloomy picture of the future of the indigenous languages. Given the policy on their use in education, it is tempting to conclude that none of them stands the chance of performing the role of MI which English currently performs. But community-based educational projects, such as that reported by Pfaffe (2000), indicate the transformation that can occur when MT has the support of the entire community. There is evidence that the status of minor languages can be improved by developing literacy primers in them. What is required is that every language be given a chance to develop. The challenge for Nigeria in this regard is enormous but so are the gains.

Finally, the need to review the policy on language to clarify the grey areas has been underscored in this paper.. The policy would have to spell out, among other things, the modalities of implementation, such as, what to do if there are no teachers to teach the MT or LIC, and how to ensure uniformity in the use of language in such a way that some children are not disadvantaged. Language is the means through which education is transmitted. Invariably, the quality of education in any nation would depend ultimately on the way it is made to perform that function.

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## 5. Code-Mixing among Igbo Speakers

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Code-mixing and code-switching are very common phenomena in any bilingual/multilingual setting of which Nigeria is an example. Almost every Nigerian (literate, semiliterate, and non-literate) is involved in these phenomena. This paper investigates code-mixing and its socio-linguistic implications in oral communication among Igbo speakers. Code-mixing, according to Crystal (1997:66), involves the transfer of linguistic elements from one language into another. The data for the research are sourced from the speech forms of religious preachers in different parts of Igboland. Sermons are recorded at different church services in Igboland. The objective of the paper is to examine the communicative effectiveness of preachers as they mix the English and Igbo codes in their preaching. One of the highlights of this paper is that code-mixing obstructs information, particularly for monolinguals. Excessive code-mixing truncates communication and makes it uncoordinated, thereby hindering the global understanding of the subject matter. The paper recommends that preachers should prepare their sermons/speeches with utmost care and well in advance in a given language and avoid code-mixing in order to avoid bastardization and deformation of language.

### 1. Introduction

The paper aims to study and analyse the phenomenon of code-mixing among Igbo speakers. Code is defined by Wardhaugh (2002:87) as a neutral term to refer to any kind of system that two or more people employ for communication. Crystal (1997:66) refers to it as a neutral label for any system of communication involving language. Code mixing according to Crystal (1997:66), involves the transfer of linguistic elements from one language into another and Code-switching according to the same source describes a situation of switch bilingual speakers, between standard and regional forms of English, between Welsh and English in parts of Wales or between occupational and domestic varieties. Code-mixing and code-switching are very common phenomena in any bilingual/multilingual setting of which Nigeria is a typical example. The two phenomena are interrelated even though linguists tend to distinguish between them. They cannot be separated in this work because an Igbo speaker code-mixes and code-switches at the same time in the same situation of communication. In other words, the two phenomena will be used interchangeably in this paper. An Igbo native speaker is so used to code-mixing that he does not always know when he mixes both English and Igbo and central Igbo and dialect in the same utterance. The mixture has become so natural to Igbo speakers that they can hardly make a sentence in Igbo without one or two words of the English Language. This paper investigates the mixing of English and Igbo (otherwise known as *engligbo*) in



the same utterance. Infact, every Nigerian speaker (literate, semi-literate and non-literate) is involved in the phenomena of code-switching and code-mixing of English and the native language. The paper will be taken in two parts, the first part will be concerned with the theoretical discussions of code-mixing and code-switching while the second part will try an analysis of the sample of the corpus of the Igbo speakers.

## **Section A**

### **1.1 Objective of the Study**

The objective of this paper is to discuss with ample examples the speech behaviour/pattern of Igbo native speakers. In other words, the communicative habit of Igbo speakers will be investigated so as to determine the effectiveness or otherwise of the message delivered/received.

### **1.2 Scope and Limitation of Study**

The paper targets Igbo religious preachers such as priests, pastors and lay preachers. The data are sourced from the preaching and homilies of these “men of God” at churches, in the streets, in the buses and at crusades in different parts of Igbo land at different times.

### **1.3 Method of Constitution of Corpus and Procedure**

The corpus for the research is realized through uncontrolled audio cassette recordings and jottings of the preaching of targeted Igbo preachers. In transcribing the corpus, we retained only the segments of homilies/preaching that contain the speech forms (*engligbo*) that are relevant for our study and analysis of code-switching/code-mixing between Igbo and English in Igbo communications.

Code-switching/code-mixing are characteristics of a multilingual community. Gal (1988:247) as recorded in Wardhaugh (2002:100) describes code-switching as a conversational strategy used to establish, cross or destroy group boundaries; to create, evoke or change interpersonal relations with their rights and obligations. He states that the ability to shift from one language to another is accepted as quite normal. Wardhaugh suggest motivation among others as one of the causes of code-switching/code-mixing by speakers. He lists solidarity, accommodation to listeners, choice of topic and perceived social and cultural distance as possible reasons why speakers shift from one language to another. Wardhaugh however argues that whatever motivates a native speaker to mix codes during speech must be an unconscious stimulus because most speakers are not aware that they have shifted from one code or even mixed the codes in the course of the same discussion. He distinguishes between situational and metaphorical code-switching. He states that situational code-switching occurs when the languages used change according to the situations in which the conversants find themselves. Metaphorical code-switching on the other hand occurs when a change of topic requires a change in the language. The competence of bilinguals/multilinguals is not exactly the same in all languages. Sridhar (1996:50) as recorded in Wardhaugh (2002:95) observes that multilingualism involving balanced, native-like command of all languages in the repertoire is uncommon. Multilinguals have varying degrees of command of the different

repertoires. The differences in competence in the various languages might range from command of a few lexical items, formulaic expressions such as greetings and rudimentary conversational skills all the way to excellent command of the grammar and vocabulary and specialized register and styles. Quoting Sridhar in Wardhaugh (2002:95), *multilinguals develop competence in each of the codes to the extent that they need it and for the contexts in which each of the languages is used.*

The speaker is of course more competent in the code that he uses more often than the ones used occasionally.

## 2. Implications of Code-mixing in Reception and Comprehension of Messages.

The purpose of this section is to examine the extent to which comprehension is enhanced between communicating partners in code-switching/code-mixing situations. Vanoye (1973:14) using varying degrees of the command of different repertoires distinguishes reception from comprehension of messages. He illustrates with examples the different stages by which a message can be received but may not be understood. He argues that the comprehension of a received message will depend on the degree of the command of the different repertoire. In other words, if the speaker or locutor (or what Vanoye calls *emetteur*) does not possess the same degree of the command of the different repertoire, the message he dispatches may be received but may not be understood by the listener (or *recepteur* according to Vanoye.) for instance, in a situation of an English native speaker and an Igbo native speaker who do not understand each other's language. Communication cannot take place between them because the linguistic sign or code is uncommon to both partners. The situation of the two conversants may be represented as in the following:



Figure 1

In the above situation, the message (whether in Igbo or English) may be received by the communicating partners but may not be understood.

Another example may be a situation where a language learner has limited knowledge of the language he is exposed to, and he is required to read an advanced/sophisticated text in the language. In this case, the language learner has command of only a few lexical items. What he has in his repertoire is like a shopping list without consolidated expressions that involve grammatical competence. The situation can be represented thus:

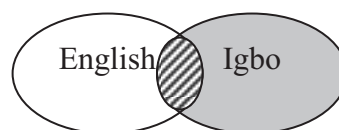
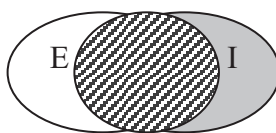


Figure 2

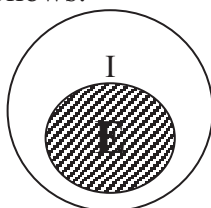
In the above, the message is received but the comprehension is very limited because the linguistic code common to the communication partners is limited. The illustration can be made with an Igbo native speaker (student) studying Hausa in a school for a period of few weeks.

Yet in another situation, the communication is large because the linguistic code common to the conversants is large but certain linguistic codes coming from the locutor may be strange to the interlocutor such that the message is received but not completely understood. Such a situation may be found with a lecture given to students whose level is still low. For instance, teaching additional mathematics or Trigonometry to students in the junior classes of the secondary school when they do not have the capacity of conceptualizing the abstract thinking of the subjects. The situation can be represented thus:



*Figure 3*

The next stage is that where the message is received and is completely understood because all the linguistic codes from the speaker are familiar to the listener. Such a situation may be represented as follows:



*Figure 4*

From the above illustrations, it is observed that communication takes place only in the fourth stage (figure four) where all the linguistic elements are common to the communicating partners. This is an example of a perfect communication. The above analyses from Vanoye show that code-mixing may hinder the comprehension of a message because of the presence of the linguistic codes that may be strange to the communicating partners especially monolinguals.

## **Section B**

### **2. Presentation of Data**

Here the corpus will be analysed, the actual utterances of the preachers as recorded will be discussed. But one may ask, “why does an Igbo native speaker mix his Igbo language with English?” In other words, what are the causes of code-mixing? The causes or some of the causes of code-mixing by Igbo speakers are traceable to some of the following:

- i. Rebellion: Lack of adequate knowledge of Igbo can cause a rebellion in the sense that whenever a speaker lacks an appropriate word during his speech, the English word immediately comes in handy and fills the vacuum.
- ii. Laxity in Language Use: When the speaker does not take time to organize his thoughts and words, he uses words with reckless abandon hence recklessness in language use.
- iii. A Demonstration of Multilingualism: An Igbo native speaker normally likes to show and prove to his hearers that he can also speak some other languages, and chipping in some words of English alongside Igbo words will show his hearers that he is also learned.
- iv. A Demonstration of Language Management: Just as in the case of multilingualism, an Igbo native speaker may want to show that he can manage other languages and so he shifts his codes from side to side.
- v. Habit/Mannerism: It is a matter of habit for most Igbo speakers to mix Igbo with English. It is very rare to find an Igbo speaker who speaks pure Igbo.
- vi. Code-mixing can also occur when the speaker is discussing a topic that is strange of foreign to him.

Some or all of the above causes may be responsible for the speech behaviours of the Igbo speakers. The following are some of the samples of the preaching of some of these “men of God”.

| <i>Englilgbo</i>                                                                         | <i>Gloss in Igbo</i>                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Ihe ọbuna ga-eweta nkewa <i>should be avoided.</i>                                    | A ga-ezeli ihe ọbuna ga-eweta nkewa.                                                           |
| 2. <i>Unity</i> bu <i>strength</i> , <i>division</i> bu <i>evil.</i>                     | Igwe bu ike, nkewa bu alu.                                                                     |
| 3. <i>Our interest in them</i> bu ka Chineke mee ka <i>whatever they do</i> dili ha nma. | Ebum n'obi anyi bu ka Chineke mee ka ihe ọbuna ha mere dili ha nma.                            |
| 4. Dika a na-agwa anyi maka <i>stations of the cross.</i>                                | Dika a na-agwa anyi maka ngarube nke obe.                                                      |
| 5. Iso Chukwu di <i>better than</i> itinye uche na mmadu.                                | Iso Chukwu ka nma kalia itinye uche na mmadu.                                                  |
| 6. Maka ndi na pampa umu ha <i>too much.</i>                                             | Maka ndi na-azuto umu ha nnukwu.                                                               |
| 7. Nke Okenyere na-alu, na-eje ozi <i>without complaint.</i>                             | Nke Okenyere na-alu na-eje ozi na-enweghi mkpesa.                                              |
| 8. <i>Upon the freedom</i> niine e nyelu ya bu nwatakiri.                                | Na-agbanyeghi na ohele nine e nyelu nwatakiri a ime ihe solu ya.                               |
| 9. O kwa <i>regret</i> na <i>remorse</i> bu ebe a na-agbakwasị ukwu welu agbaghalu njo.  | O kwa obi loghalu elogha na obi mgbawa maka njo bu ebe a na-agbakwasị ukwu welu agbaghalu njo. |
| 10. <i>Automatically</i> Chukwu na-agbaghalu anyi ozigbo.                                | N'atufulu oge Chukwu na-agbaghalu anyi ozigbo.                                                 |
| 11. <i>The best thing</i> bu <i>to send the Ark back to</i> ndi nwe ya.                  | Ihe kachasi mma bu ibuchighalu ndi nwe Ugbo, Ugbo ha.                                          |

|                                                                                                                |                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12. N'akwukwọ Exodus <i>to be precise</i> .                                                                    | N'akwukwọ Exodus na-igbu okwu nkenke.                                                     |
| 13. Mkpọ a ka Moses kụlụ n'ime orimili, ọ <i>turns to blood</i> .                                              | Mkpọ a ka Moses kụlụ n'ime orimili, o yọlụ ọbala.                                         |
| 14. <i>The day e dedicate-ili ya bu temple</i> .                                                               | Mbọsi e runyelu ya bu temple.                                                             |
| 15. Paul dī asọ na-agwa anyị <i>that Christ is the head of the church</i> .                                    | Paul dī asọ na-agwa anyị na Christ bu onye isi nke nzukọ.                                 |
| 16. Na ihẹ kwesili anyi bu onwu <i>because the glory of God has departed from us</i> .                         | Na Ihẹ kwesili anyi bu onwu maka na ebube nke Chukwu arapugo anyi.                        |
| 17. O bulu na i mego ya bu <i>mistake</i> , gbaa mbọ yọọ, Chukwu ga-enyere gi aka.                             | O bulu na i mefięgo gbaa mbọ yọọ, Chukwu ga-enyere gi aka.                                |
| 18. <i>Everything that you are</i> , i ga-eji ya fụ Osebuluwa Chukwu n'anya.                                   | Ihe ọbuna i bu, i ga-eji ya fụ Osebuluwa Chukwu n'anya.                                   |
| 19. Oge onye ode akwukwọ julụ Jesu iwu kachasi iwu, Jesu weę gaa <i>to the scriptures</i> .                    | Oge onye ode akwukwọ julụ Jesu iwu kachasi iwu, Jesu weę gaa n'akwukwọ nsọ.               |
| 20. <i>The greatest law of God</i> , nke mbu, ifunanya ka a na-achọ, nke ibua ifunanya ka a na-achọ.           | Iwu kachasi n'iwu Chukwu, nke mbu, ifunanya ka a na-achọ, nke ibua ifunanya ka a na-achọ. |
| 21. Mụọ nsọ ahụ <i>reveal</i> ilụ Mary na ọ ga-adị ime, <i>reveal</i> ikwalu Elizabeth na Mary dī ime.         | Mụọ nsọ ahụ gwalu Mary na ọ ga-adị ime, gwakwuzili Elizabeth na Mary dī ime.              |
| 22. <i>Tell me, is it wrong that</i> na anyi ga-ayọ nwaanyi a ayiyo.                                           | Gwa m ma ọ bu na ọ dirọ mma na anyi ga-ayọ nwaanyi a ayiyo.                               |
| 23. Uka weę tinyezie <i>the other part of</i> Ekenę Maria.                                                     | Uka weę tinyezie akuku Ekenę Maria nke ọzọ.                                               |
| 24. O weę nweę <i>courage</i> gwa Jesu, ha ẹnwerozikwa mmanya.                                                 | O weę kaa obi gwa Jesu, ha ẹnwerozikwa mmanya.                                            |
| 25. <i>Joseph of Arimathea</i> ga hụ Nicodemus <i>because he admired Christ secretly</i> .                     | Joseph nke Arimathea ga hụ Nicodemus makana ọ na-ejekwu Christ na nzizo.                  |
| 26. Ihẹ m ji na-ekwu ihẹ a bu na-ẹnwere <i>many such Christians in our midst</i> .                             | Ihẹ m ji na-ekwu ihẹ a bu na-ẹnwere ndi otu Christi dī etua n'etiti anyi                  |
| 27. Joseph na Nicodemus <i>thought that what will make up for their relationship with Jesus</i> bu ije nie ya. | Joseph na Nicodemus chere na ha ga-edozi okwu dī n'etiti ha na Jesu site ije nie ya.      |
| 28. O buluzia ya bu bridge wechighalu mmadu <i>back to God</i> .                                               | O buluzia ya bu akwa mmili wechighalu mmadu azu ebe Chukwu no.                            |
| 29. Makana e nyego anyi <i>criteria of going to heaven</i> .                                                   | Makana e nyego anyi usoro e ji eje enuigwe.                                               |
| 30. Ka ọ ghalu ibu anyi nwesia <i>relationship</i> mgbe anyi no n'ụwa.                                         | Ka ọ ghalu ibu anyi nwesia mmekolita mgbe anyi no n'ụwa...                                |

### 3. Analysis of the Data

Having exposed the corpus and the way Igbo preachers use the language one of the most striking questions that comes to mind is “Are there no Igbo equivalents that can replace these English phrases? Why do preachers combine English and Igbo in one utterance in such a reckless manner even when Igbo equivalents are readily available as exemplified in the corpus above. However, there are situations that task the competence of the native speaker i.e. when the right word in Igbo is not readily available as in expressions like:

- pampa ( in the context of 6 above)
- freedom ( in the context of 8 above)
- automatically ( in the context of 10 above)
- precise ( in the context of 12 above)
- temple ( as in the context of 14 above), etc

But that notwithstanding, a well prepared preacher organizes himself well in advance and would have found expressions for the seeming difficult English words even if it means paraphrasing in Igbo. Jakobson (1973:8) rightly posits that every human experience can be expressed in any language. Then, where there are deficiencies, the terminology will be modified and amplified by burrowing, calquing, by neologism, by semantic re-organisation and by circumlocution. Fortunately Igbo linguistic have come a long way in constituting metalanguage lexical lists.

### Conclusion/Recommendations

Much as bilingualism/multilingualism is encouraged and advocated, it is not however intended that languages should be bastardized/slaughtered. Igbo native speakers inflict a lot of injury on the language by the way they speak. Code-mixing obstructs information particularly for monolinguals. It truncates communication and makes it uncoordinated because of the cacophonous sound of the mixture. Code-mixing hinders the global understanding of the subject matter (again by monolinguals) as pointed out by Vanoye (1973) in his illustrations of a perfect communication. Code-mixing is not healthy for any language. It is a negative tendency because it can lead to “*glottophagy*” or the death of a language.

The paper recommends that preachers should prepare their sermons/speeches with utmost care and well in advance because according to Onumajuru (1998:84), to speak Igbo without code-switching or mixture of Igbo and English word requires long training and effort akin to those of interpreters, preachers, clergymen and broadcasters. The preachers should choose the language of the communication and limit their preaching to one language at a time. If it is a mixed audience, the preacher can preach in one language and summarize in another without necessarily mixing the two languages in one utterance. Igbo linguists should endeavour to encourage native speakers to speak Igbo correctly by providing adequate information and current dictionaries of the language.



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## **6. Code-Switching among Yoruba/English Bilinguals & its Implications for Teaching & Learning**

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The paper looks at the incidence of code-switching and code-mixing in a bilingual setting. Focus of analysis is on the extent to which code switching occurs in utterances. A total number of two hundred respondents were used for the study. Findings reveal the prevalence of the phenomenon both in school and in the larger society. One of the implications is that when pupils carry on with this pattern of language use in the secondary school, they find learning in English language difficult. To curtail its effect on education and to produce a compound bilingual, the paper suggests, among others that teachers and parents should continue to encourage their children/pupils in the frequent use of the English language both at home and outside, they should also encourage positive attitude to the use of the indigenous language, Yoruba in addition to constant oral drills, exercises and constant use of both languages, learners should be made to understand why they are studying the two languages and the need for them to speak and use them appropriately and regularly.

### **Introduction**

The Federal Government of Nigeria, through the National Policy on Education (2004) and the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999), highlights the importance of the English language as well as the Nigeria languages, both in the Education system and the society at large. The Federal Government also supports the use of the major languages – Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba for the business of the National Assembly, when adequate arrangements are put in place (FRN, 1999). The policy clearly defines which languages will be used for instruction and which are subjects at the various levels of public and private education. It recommends among others that each child should start learning in his own mother tongue or the language of the immediate environment before switching over to English. However, Babajide (2001) asserts that:

... today in Nigeria, English is used in most situations; home, office, market etc for all imaginable communication interaction, formal, informal, cordial, casual etc. The multiplicity in language has made it impossible for the Federal Government of Nigeria to decide which of the languages to use as a medium of instruction in schools. This has led to the choice of English as through the tertiary level the medium of instruction from the fourth year of primary education, while the indigenous language is used in the first three years.

This brings about the existence of bilingual education (use of two languages in education) in Nigeria. The co-existence of multiple languages in the society and bilingual education has made it possible for such languages to exert some influence on each other. Such influences are negative attitude, interference, code-switching and mixing among others.

Some researchers such as Peal and Lambert. (1962), Lanco-Worall (1972) and Grosjean (1982) discover that bilingual education is a great asset to the child. They note that the bilingual child has a better awareness of language differences and is better at learning new languages. However, Jespersen (1922) believes that the child in question hardly learns either of the two languages as perfectly as he would have done if he had limited himself to one language.

According to Jespersen (1922), among bilingual learners, there are restricted vocabularies, limited grammatical structures, spelling and pronunciation problems. Other problems are code-switching and mixing, transfer of language, hesitation and stuttering.

Finally, adequate plans for language policy and implementation are of paramount importance in order to correct these problems. It is also important to note that there is little or no commitment from the Government in the area of provision of adequate and well trained personnel, lack of support from the school boards and lack of critical evaluation of the use of the languages in education. Also, if there is little or no social use of the second language, English and there is frequent code-switching and mixing, learners will not be functionally bilingual and the overall aims of education may not be achieved.

### **Objective of the Study**

The paper is meant to determine the extent to which learners and teachers code-switch in utterances, both at school and in the larger society.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Different languages are used in the Nigerian society for different roles. For instance, the medium of instruction in the lower level of primary education is the indigenous language. English is used for the remaining levels of education, while Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba are accorded the role of National Languages. All these have led to the problem of code-switching and mixing among Yoruba/English bilinguals. This in turn has been transferred to the school environment where learners and even teachers find it difficult to separate the two languages, consequently leading to poor performance in both the indigenous and the English languages.

The study therefore looks at the incidence of code-switching and the extent to which it occurs among bilinguals. The paper specifically provides answer to the following question: To what extent do code-switching and mixing occur in the utterances of teachers and learners?

### Incidence of Code-Switching Among Bilinguals

Code-switching is another very important aspect of bilingualism and a lot of studies have been carried out on it. Ilori (1992) says code-switching is marked by constant alternation in languages in bilingual communities. Citing Gumperz (1971), she goes further to say that ‘code-switching could be for the expression of one’s thought. It could also be to convey anger or display arrogance; or to seek favour from superior officers through the demonstration of group solidarity’.

In many bilingual or multilingual communities, code-switching is the norm. Citing Scottorn and Ury, Grosjean (1982) defines it as the alternate use of two or more languages in the same utterance or conversation. He (Grosjean) provides three examples to illustrate.

- a. A French-English bilingual, speaking French and switching words in Italics to English “Vacherches Marc ( go Fetch Marc) *and bribe him* avec un chocolat (with hot chocolate) *with cream on top*”.
- b. Tanzanian speaking Swahili and switching to English (from Mkilifi, 1978), Ile (the) *accident* illrto Kea alipolose (occurred when he lost) *control* Na (and) *Aka Overturn and landed in a ditch*”.
- c. A Mexican American speaking Spanish and switching to English (from Valdes Fallis, 1976): “No me Fije has ta que ya no me dijo (I didn’t notice until he told me). Oh, *I didn’t think he’d be there*”

From the examples given, we discover that code-switching can also occur in a Diglossic situation where the standard language is mixed with the dialect. Bloom and Gumperz carried out a research in a town in Northern Norway, Hennesberget, in 1972. Reporting on their impressions, Hudson (1980) states thus:

In the course of a morning spent at the community administration office, we notice, that clerks used both standard and dialect phrases, depending on whether they were talking about affairs or not. Likewise, when residents step up in a clerks desk, greeting and talking about family affairs tend to be exchanged in the dialect, while the business part of the transaction is carried on in the standard. (p. 56).

In Nigeria, the interaction of the different languages on the Nigerian soil have given rise to the incidence of code-mixing. Ogunsiyi (2001) reveals that, nowadays, hardly can any educated Nigerian have a sustained discourse, especially in relaxed, informal context in their mother tongue without mixing some elements of English or the other way round. Among Yoruba/English bilinguals it is common to hear statements like:

- a. I am very sure *pe omo yen ati lo* (that child would have gone).
- b. *Alaafia ni mo fe* (I want good health) and I will have it by the grace of God.
- c. *The Government of the day fe ilosiwaju awon eniyan*. (encourages the prosperity of the people).

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Reasons for code-switching have been identified as:

- a. To amplify a point (Gal 1979);
- b. For consolidation among those who felt alienated from their towns and to exclude someone (Pietro 1977), and
- c. A means of changing roles from a low status to a higher one (Scotton and Ury 1977).

Code-switching can also be used for many other reasons, such as quoting what someone has said, thereby emphasizing group identity. It can be used when speakers cannot find an appropriate word or expression, in case of inadequacy in the languages being used and when the language being used does not have the items or appropriate translations for the vocabulary needed.

Whatever the situation might be, code-switching could be dangerous if used too often as it may impair the acquisition of languages.

### **Methodology**

The study is mainly descriptive. It uses the survey method, hence employing the questionnaire technique in eliciting information from both learners and teachers on the subject of study.

The population for the study consists of the speakers of the Yoruba language and the English language in Ibadan metropolis, a typical Yoruba speech Community, South West, Nigeria. Both the stratified and judgmental sampling techniques were used in selecting sample (both teachers and learners), in that children between the ages of 10 and 20 (from primary 5 to SSS III) were selected, while teachers of various disciplines, but teaching in the primary and secondary schools were used. A total number of 120 (60 male and 60 female) pupils and 80 (54 women and 26 men) teachers were therefore used for the study.

Two (2) sets of questionnaire (Teachers' questionnaire on the incidence of code-switching in utterances, (TGIC) and pupils' questionnaire on the incidence of code-switching (PQIC) were used for the study. The first section of the teachers' questionnaire sought information on the respondents' qualification, sex, profession, etc., while the second section solicited information on the incidence of code-switching in their utterances and society at large.

The pupils' questionnaire sought personal information on the respondents, while the second section also solicited responses on the issue of code-switching and mixing in utterances. The two sets of questionnaire were subjected to the scrutiny of experts in the areas of languages, test and measurement in the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council. Thereafter, ambiguities and irrelevances and other elements that were inappropriate were pointed out and corrected.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The two sets of questionnaire were personally administered to 120 learners and 80 teachers in five different primary schools and five secondary schools (JSS1 –

SSS 3). The questionnaires were collected immediately after they were responded to.

The four point Likert scale of measurement (strongly agree 4, agree 3; disagree; 2, strongly disagree, 1) was adapted. Having scored the responses, the data collected were analyzed using statistics, which included frequency counts, percentages and mean scores. Results are as presented in tables 1 - 2.

Table 1: *Pupils' Responses on the Incidence of Code-switching*

| S/<br>No | Statement                                                                        | SA            | A             | D             | SD            | Mean<br>Score |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1.       | I mix both English and Yoruba when speaking at home                              | 80<br>(66.6)  | 18<br>(15)    | 20<br>(16.7)  | 2<br>(1.67)   | 3.46          |
| 2.       | I switch from English to Yoruba when interacting with friends and acquaintances. | 75<br>(62.5)  | 40<br>(33.3)  | 3<br>(2.5)    | 2<br>(1.67)   | 3.56          |
| 3.       | I switch from the Yoruba language to English at school                           | 40<br>(33.33) | 33<br>(27.5)  | 33<br>(27.5)  | 14<br>(11.67) | 3.22          |
| 4.       | It is difficult to speak without mixing codes.                                   | 56<br>(46.47) | 31<br>(25.83) | 25<br>(20.83) | 8<br>(6.67)   | 3.13          |
| 5.       | I switch code to emphasize a point                                               | 33<br>(27.5)  | 22<br>(18.33) | 35<br>(29.17) | 30<br>(25)    | 2.48          |
| 6.       | I switch code when I do not know the right word to use                           | 38<br>(31.67) | 29<br>(24.17) | 28<br>(23.33) | 25<br>(20.83) | 2.66          |
| 7.       | Code-switching can limit my knowledge of the English language                    | 29<br>(24.17) | 18<br>(15)    | 27<br>(22.5)  | 46<br>(38.3)  | 2.25          |
| 8.       | Teachers use the English/ Yoruba mixed code in the classroom                     | 22<br>(18.33) | 46<br>(38.33) | 22<br>(18.33) | 30<br>(25)    | 2.50          |
| 9.       | Teachers converse with their colleagues in the English/Yoruba mixed code         | 36<br>(30)    | 30<br>(25)    | 36<br>(30)    | 18<br>(15)    | 2.70          |

Note: (% scores are in parentheses) SA: strongly agree; A: Agree; D: disagree, SD: strongly disagree.

### Discussion on Pupils' Responses

Table 1, items 1 and 2 with mean scores of 3.46 and 3.55 reveal that children do switch from English language to the Yoruba language in conversation at home, in interactions with friends and acquaintances. Even in schools, pupils admit to code-switching and mixing as a mean score of 3.22 (item 3) indicates this. About 56% (item 6) of the pupils also admit that they switch code when they do not know the right word to use. However less than 40% of respondents (mean score of 2.25, item 7) do not agree that code-switching can limit their knowledge of the English language.

Pupils also admit that teachers use the Yoruba/English mixed code in the classroom and that they do converse with colleagues in mixed code. Items 8 and 9 with mean scores of 2.50 and 2.70 respectively support these. Generally



speaking, pupils admit that code-mixing is common in the society. This is revealed in item 10 with a mean score of 3.48.

Table 2: *Teachers' Responses on the Incidence of Code Switching and Mixing in utterances*

| S/N<br>o | Statement                                                                                             | SA           | A            | D            | SD           | Mean<br>Score |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1        | I mix both Yoruba and the English languages when conversing                                           | 41<br>(51.3) | 23<br>(28.7) | 10<br>(12.5) | 6<br>(7.5)   | 3.24          |
| 2        | I switch from the English language to Yoruba or vice-versa while teaching.                            | 25<br>(31.2) | 13<br>(16.2) | 21<br>(26.3) | 21<br>(26.3) | 2.52          |
| 3        | Colleagues mix both the English and Yoruba languages when speaking.                                   | 37<br>(46.2) | 20<br>(25.0) | 16<br>(20.0) | 7<br>(8.8)   | 3.09          |
| 4        | Pupils mix both English and Yoruba while answering questions in the classroom                         | 23<br>(28.7) | 24<br>(30.0) | 22<br>(27.5) | 11<br>(13.8) | 2.74          |
| 5        | Code switching and mixing can occur as a result of insufficient acquisitions of the English language. | 19<br>(23.8) | 28<br>(35.0) | 27<br>(33.8) | 6<br>(7.5)   | 2.75          |
| 6        | Code switching is the after – effect of the use of English and Yoruba in the society                  | 56<br>(70.0) | 12<br>(15.0) | 6<br>(7.5)   | 6<br>(7.5)   | 3.47          |
| 7        | It is difficult to speak without switching codes                                                      | 28<br>(35.0) | 25<br>(31.2) | 19<br>(23.8) | 8<br>(10.0)  | 2.91          |
| 8        | I switch code to emphasize a point                                                                    | 33<br>(41.3) | 23<br>(28.7) | 13<br>(16.2) | 11<br>(13.8) | 2.97<br>2.56  |
| 9        | Code switching can limit children's acquisition of the English language                               | 23<br>(28.7) | 29<br>(36.3) | 16<br>(20.0) | 12<br>(15.0) |               |
| 10       | Code switching and mixing are common among bilinguals                                                 | 46<br>(57.5) | 31<br>(38.8) | 1<br>(1.2)   | 2<br>(2.5)   | 3.50          |

Note: (% scores are in parentheses) SA: strongly agree; A: Agree; D: disagree, SD: strongly disagree.

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**Discussion on Teachers' Responses**

In addition to the heavy use of mixed codes in conversations, teachers admit that they do code mix while teaching. Items 1 and 2, table 2, reveal mean scores of 3.24 and 2.52 respectively, in support of this assertion. They agree that code – switching is common among bilinguals and that it is the after-effect of the use of two languages in the society. Items 6 and 10 in table 2 (with percentage scores of 68 and 77) indicate these beliefs. However, teachers agree that they do mix codes to emphasize a point, but that it can limit children's acquisition of the English Language. Items 8 and 9, table 2 with means scores of 2.97 and 2.56 respectively indicate these assertions. Finally, they agree that code switching and mixing can occur as a result of insufficient acquisition of the English Language; item 5 (mean score of 2.75) buttresses this.

**Implications of Findings for Bilingual Education**

As discovered in this study, teachers employ the use of mixed code (English/Yoruba) both in and outside the classroom to relate with pupils and colleagues. Pupils are expected to be taught in English, but teachers sometimes resort to the use of the mixed code in a bid to explain clearly. Regardless of the degree of code switching in the process of teaching and learning, these same learners are expected to be tested only in English. In a situation like this, achievement in tests and examinations may be inadequate to serve as a true measure of their abilities, as what they could express is a fraction of what they actually know.

This in essence means that learning cannot take place in a situation where both teachers and learners cannot handle each language as an efficient tool of communication. When pupils carry over this pattern of language use to the secondary level, they find learning in English Language difficult. This is because it is the sole medium (or supposed to be the sole medium) of instruction at this level. Pupil's inability to achieve a functional command of the English Language in school poses a threat to their learning. They are therefore faced with the problem of learning English and learning in English. A situation like this makes the objectives of bilingual education unrealizable. The set objectives of education in the country become unattainable if the medium of instruction, whether English or the indigenous language poses some threat.

**Recommendations**

In order to produce a compound bilingual (a person who learns his two languages separately and keeps them apart in use), teachers who are qualified to teach the languages must be employed. Such teachers must be well versed in the English language so as to be able to transfer the correct usage of the language to the learners. They should ensure that they expose learners to the areas of differences and similarities in the two languages, to minimize code switching and mixing and language interference. In addition to this, teachers should be exposed to regular

seminars and workshops, and in such workshops, the disadvantages of using mixed codes should be highlighted.

Both parents and teachers should continue to encourage their children/pupils in the use of English Language at home and outside. They should encourage positive attitude to the use and study of both the indigenous language and the English language. Learners should be made to understand why they are studying the languages and the need for them to speak and use the languages appropriately and regularly.

### **Conclusion**

The paper looked at the incidence of code switching and mixing in utterances. A total number of 200, (120 pupils and 80 teachers) respondents were used for the study. Two sets of questionnaire bothering on the incidence of code switching were responded to. Findings revealed that there is no sustained use of the English Language, both in schools and the society at large. Where any of the languages, especially English is used, code mixing and switching occur.

Ayodele (1988) says, “the level of competence of Nigerian learners in the English language determines to a large extent their level of performances in academics generally”. This implies that a lot needs to be corrected to make learning in English a worthwhile exercise. Through the study, it was discovered that code mixing is a common occurrence, among learners and teachers. Efforts to minimize this practice should therefore be put in place. It is believed that if constant practice in the use of the languages (English and Yoruba languages), both in schools and at home is done through oral work, drills, encouragement in various ways by both parents and teachers, children’s use of the languages will improve.

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## **7. Code-Switching Patterns and their Pragmatic Functions among Hausa Speakers**

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Code-switching is a phenomenon that has been misunderstood among Hausa speakers despite the fact that it has become an unmarked repertoire in the society. It is against this background that the paper sets out to look for the structural and contextual patterns with their pragmatic functions among two age groups of young and old generations, using tape recorded speeches from different settings as raw data. Another main interest of the paper is to find any significant relationship between the age of the speakers and the patterns. The structural patterns found using the frame-process are model inter-, intra-sentential and tag switches. The contextual patterns are discourse-related, metaphoric and situational with pragmatic functions such as emphasis, translations persuasions and explanations. No significant relationship between the age and patterns at  $p \geq 0.5$  was found. Recommendations are forwarded.

### **Introduction**

The paper is an analysis of code-switching patterns and their pragmatic functions among Hausa speakers. Code-switching is a common feature of bilingual speech. It is found in multilingual societies and even in the supposedly monolingual settings of France and the United Kingdom.

In most places, including Nigeria, code-switching is seen as an exception because of the social stigma attached to it (Ogunremi, 1992). This arises from the conception of the phenomenon as an obstacle to the purity of the various Nigerian languages and English. The significance of this paper is to enlighten the society on its patterns and functions.

It is rather controversial whether bilingual switching is normal or abnormal because it has been viewed with suspicion and as a language aberration for quite sometime (Olaoye, 1992 and camilleri, 1995). Some see it as an essential fact of life in many multilingual societies, which must be developed (Praff, 1991), while others (Ogunremi, 1992) see it as unusual and an abnormal process to be discouraged. The paper sets out to find solutions to this controversy by attempting to identify the contextual and linguistic structural patterns in relation to the age of the speaker and to determine whether code-switching has any pragmatic function among Hausa speakers.

Asher (1994) and Bhatia (1997) define code-switching as the juxtaposition of elements from two or more languages or dialects with the switch still consistent with the internal morphological and syntactic rules of the matrix language. It is a



systematic alternating use of two languages or varieties within a single conversation or utterance (Lierbscher & Dailey-O Cain, 2005).

### **Hausa-English Linguistic Contact**

Hausa came into contact with English as far back as the nineteenth century (19<sup>th</sup>) with the colonisation of Nigeria. This led to the adoption of English as a language of education and an official language after independence. The adoption made it possible for Hausa speakers like other Nigerians, to learn the language and become bilingual with English as the dominating language. This is because of the prestige attached to it as the language of the colonial masters (Yakasai, 1967; Salim 1981 and 1987).

As a lingua franca, English became the language of communication among the multiplicity of languages. Olaoye (1991) asserts that the amount of influence English has on a Nigerian language depends on the length and intensity of the contact. This means that the speakers become fully bilingual if the intensity is high and can only understand some aspects of the language when it is low. The contact of Hausa and English gave rise to code-switching as a communicative phenomenon in almost all domains of interaction.

### **Code-Switching Patterns in other Languages**

Code-switching patterns could be contextual i.e. if they involve all those activities which make it relevant to some aspects of context such as participant roles, speech act or topic. Among the contextual patterns are discourse related, which serves as a resource for accomplishing different sequences or participant related where any of the participants switches from one language to another and it is accepted as normal by the listener(s) (Stroud, 1990 and Auer, 1990). In most cases interpretation are not possible out of the context of expression, especially the pragmatic ones. It mostly happens in informal settings with in-group members, to show solidarity or closeness, as in:

1. Ch: ee ti farina e cu co la forgotta, - Italian  
turn them round and then put the sugo - English
- L: Cosa? Cosa? Si prende la farina quello l'ho Capito poi.
- Ch: Yeah and then I don't know, che mette English Italian

(Italian-English code-switching Auer, 1990:84).

The conversation in example 1 showed discourse related code-switching. Speaker B kept prompting speaker A to continue with the conversation even though there was a lot of English switching. Many interactional sequences were observed and code-switching was used to achieve the communicative goals by speaker A.

Another contextual pattern is where a speaker makes A a matrix language, then switches to language B which is accepted by the other speaker as a new language of interaction (Gumperz, 1982).

- 
2.    A: ... I'd smoke the rest of the pack myself  
      B:     That's all you smoke?  
      A:     That's all I smoked  
      B:     and how about now?  
      A:     estos me los halle estos palls malls me los halla ron  
              (Spanish)

(English-Spanish code-switching, Gumperz, 1982)

The conversation continued from there with B accepting the switch as normal, otherwise, B would have stopped the conversation. In this pattern, acceptance of the second language for discussing the topic is contextual due to the situation (the friendship domain) and participants.

Language negotiation is considered to be a contextual pattern. This is because the speakers try to follow the chain of conversation despite the change in language.

3.    A:     Ho una nuova macchina lo sai?  
              (I've got a new car you know?) Italian  
      B:     Ah ce'st bein! Et ce'st quoi?  
              (Great! what kind?)  
      A:     Una jeep  
              (a jeep)  
              Italian  
      B:     Pal mal  
              French (not bad)  
      A:     Boj!  
              Italian (well !)  
      B:     Benquoi? Un jeep ce'st pal mal  
              French (come on, a jeep is not bad)  
      A:     Qui, mais jaurais prefere autre chose  
              French (I know, but I will have preferred something else)

(Italian-French code-switching, Beatens-Beardsmore & Anselmi, 1991:423).

The context of discussion in extract 3 is negotiation. Although both A and B were speaking in two different languages, later speaker A negotiated by accepting to speak in French. Contextual patterns could also be situational that involve a change in participant strategies, physical situation or setting. Metaphoric which involves whole conversations within one role relationship, it happens when a change in topic requires language change and conversational types that are not dependent on changes of interlocutors topic or situational (Valdes fallies, 1978 and Marasigan, 1983).

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Structural patterns are the combination of code-switching instances that are found in an utterance. Possible structural patterns can be inter, intra-sentential or tag switches (Myers-Scotton, 1993). Inter-sentential code-switching according to McArthur (1996) is found where a change of language occurs at a clause or sentence boundary e.g.

- (4). P: Sometimes I'll start a sentence in English  
y termino en espanol  
(and finish it in Spanish)

(English-Spanish code-switching. McArthur, 1996:221)

The switch is inter-sentential because it is at a clause boundary intra-sentential switching occurs where the switch is within the clause or sentence boundary (Boeschoten, 1990), as in:

- (5). O blond e meisje afruden yapti.  
Dutch Turkish  
(that blond girls has got her degree).

(Dutch-Turkish code-switching, Boeschoten, 1990:91).

In example 5, the switch is within the sentence boundary which makes it an intra-sentential switch. When some sets of phrases in one language are inserted into the utterance of another language, then tag switches are witnessed. They can be nouns, verbs, prepositions or determiners. An example from English-Panjabi languages,

- (6). D: It's a nice day hana?  
English Panjabi  
(isn't it?)  
(Rampton, 1995:303).

The question hana? is the tag switch. It is a single word indicating a tag question.

### **Code-Switching Functions**

Code-switching performs some functions in speech. It may serve as an indicator of group membership and identity. Switching back and forth between languages signals a speakers neutrality on the choice of code. Fluent bilinguals use code-switching for stylistic purposes and may signal minor fluctuations in the inter-language of non competent speakers.

Heller (1987 and 1990) is of the view that code-switching could be used as a political strategy in the process of ethnic mobilization. Code-switching in multilingual communities can reveal not only the extent of stability of inter-group relation but also show the direction in which access to materials is regulated.

Code-switching is seen as a contextualization cue which is a means of conveying extra-linguistic meanings that are subjected to certain norms. This may be socio-cultural such as emphasis, request or recycling of information (Gumperz, 1990 & Auer 1990). Humour could be achieved or heightened by the use of code-switching. A shift to another language could trigger particular associations in the minds of listeners (Saville-Troike, 1982).

Code-switching can be used as discourse strategy to achieve certain interactional effects such as interjections and idiomatic expressions at specific points during conversation. It could also be a resource for achieving topic control or fulfilling particular pedagogic functions such as, making asides, quotations or moving in and out of teaching/learning contexts (L1, 2000). Code-switching functions differ according to historical, economic and social differences in a community. Switching appears to be a creative activity in exploring communicative resources because languages are not exchanged randomly, instead of seeing it as a sign of deficiency in one language or the other.

### **Code-Switching among Hausa Speakers**

Data were collected using audio-tape recordings of speeches and conversations in the home, office, market place and public functions. The length of the recordings depended on the type of interaction and activities involved. The domains considered are those of public interaction where people are not conscious of their speech.

A sample of 120 respondents was divided into two groups of speakers of the younger and older generations: the younger generation from fifteen to thirty four and the older generation between the ages of thirty-five and sixty-five. The hypothesis to be tested is “there is no significant relationship between the age of the speaker and the code-switching patterns produced”.

The analysis of the structural and contextual patterns was done using frequency tables and correlation coefficient statistic. The code-switching patterns found among the older and younger generations of Hausa – English bilinguals is presented in table 1.1 showing the number of occurrences and percentages

Table 1.1: *Code-switching patterns among Hausa-English speakers according to age*

| Patterns                 | Age Differentials | Total Number of Occurrences | Percentages |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Structural patterns:     | Old generation    | 451                         | 42.83       |
|                          | Young             | 602                         | 57.16       |
| Contextual patterns:     | Old               | 138                         | 13.10       |
|                          | Young             | 120                         | 11.38       |
| Situational patterns:    | Old               | 133                         | 12.63       |
|                          | Young             | 208                         | 19.75       |
| Conversational patterns: | Old               | 75                          | 7.17        |
|                          | Young             | 84                          | 7.97        |

|                      |       |     |       |
|----------------------|-------|-----|-------|
| Metaphoric patterns: | Old   | 128 | 12.15 |
|                      | Young | 167 | 15.85 |

Correlation coefficient @ 0.1548 / at  $p \geq 0.05$

Table 1.1 shows the structural patterns of the old as 451 (42.83%) and the younger generation as 602 (57.16%). The contextual patterns are 138 (13.10%) for the older generation as against 120 (11.38%) for young speakers. Old generation has 133 (12.63%) situational patterns against 208 (19.75%) for younger speakers, one hundred and twenty – eight (12.15%) cases of conversational switching among the older speakers, while the younger generation has 167 (15.85%) cases. Metaphoric switching among the younger speakers account for 84 (7.97%) cases, while the older generation has 75 (7.17%).

This shows that the younger generation have higher instances of overall code-switching as can be noticed from the number of occurrences in situational conversational and metaphoric patterns. The table reveals the correlation between the age of the speaker and patterns produced to be 0.1548 which shows no significant relationship. This means, the patterns do not correlates with age.

An example of inter-sentential contextual pattern from old generation:

- (7) I: Kuma, he is trying to see that all the civil servants in his state are comfortable

The structural patterns in ML constituent + EL Island. The switch is intra-sentential and contextual because the other participant accepted it as normal due to the role (an elder) of the speaker. The pragmatic value is emphasis to make the listener know that the governor is doing a good job.

- (8) S: Idan iyayenka suka zama late karshen wahala ke nan.

(when the parents die, that is the beginning of all troubles).

Extract 8 is an example of switching by younger generation speakers. The structural pattern is ML island + El constituent, two younger speakers talking about working hard at school to achieve something in life. The switch is a contextual tag switch, because of the importance of the topic. The pragmatic value was emphasizing the death of the parents.

- (9) T: Man zaitun mai sa fata ta yi kyau da laushi, ga shi da kore aljannu, basa iya zama a inda yake. This go make your body soft and smooth, and jinn no de stay for your house if you keep am for house, e go run.

Structural pattern is ML island + EL Island

Example (9) is a contextual inter-sentential switch by a young trader peddling his wares, selling Olive oil. The pragmatic value was translation to persuade buyers that were non-Hausa speakers. The switch is contextual because of the participant role.

- (10) D: shi sickle cell ba a blood group a ke gane shi ba,  
 akwai wani irin gwaji da ake cewa genotype a nan ake gane shi.  
 (sickle cell aneamia could only be diagnosed through the genotype test and not the blood group).

The structural pattern is ML Island + EL Islands. A contextual tag switch by an older generation doctor explaining how sickle cell aneamia could be diagnosed. The switch was contextual due to the topic of discussion.

Examples of conversational type of switching by older generation speakers:

- (11) S: Gaskiya gidan *belongs to a friend*.  
 (In truth, the house belongs to a friend).

The switch is an intra-sentential conversational type, because it is not dependent on any variable. The structural pattern is ML Island + EL Island. The age was old generation and the pragmatic value was explanation. The speaker was explaining why he cannot rent a certain house.

Conversational patterns by younger speakers:

- (12) B: An bani kati ne just to bring no details were offered.  
 (I was just asked to bring the cards no details were given).

The structural pattern is ML Island + EL Island intra-sentential conversational because switch was not dependent on any variable, the speaker is among friends. The pragmatic value is emphasizing that details were not given.

Metaphorical patterns produced by older generation:

- (13) S: Haba Hajiya! Ai money no de talk,  
 Ki zabi sony karami  
 (Oh Hajiya! Money does not show on people, why not choose the small sony radio).

The structural pattern is ML Island + EL Island. An intra-sentential and metaphorical switch, because of the participant role, the trader was trying to convince the customer to buy the radio. The pragmatic pattern was persuasion.

Example among the younger generation:

- (14) M: Four-0-six mota ce ta gani ta fada! Idan  
 mutum zai yi tafiya ba ya bukaratar kome. To wai ma! Katsina how many



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emirates ke gare su.

(Four-0-six is beautiful and efficient car, one does not need anything better.  
What of Katsina, how many emirates do they have?)

The structural patterns is ML Islands + EL Island. The switch is intra-sentential and metaphorical due to the change in topic. The interlocutors were discussing about cars when the speaker suddenly became interested in emirate councils. The pragmatic function was questioning.

S: Situational patterns among the younger generation

(15) B: Sai mun dauke mulki na kabilanci da mulkin mallaka watau  
colonialism za mu iya ci gaba.

(We cannot be developed until we are able to do away with tribalism  
and colonialism).

The structural pattern is a tag switch ML Island + EL constituent. It is situational because of the setting (the school environment). The pragmatic function is explanation.

An example from older generation:

L: Su bankuna are independent bodies.  
(Banks are independent bodies)

The structural pattern is ML Island + EL Island – an intra-sentential situational switch. The setting made it situational. The speaker was explaining to the audience that banks operate independent of the government. The pragmatic function was emphasis.

| Structural patterns | Other patterns         | Age   | Mean  | r      | p - value | N   | Decision                |
|---------------------|------------------------|-------|-------|--------|-----------|-----|-------------------------|
| Tag                 | Contextual pattern     | Young | 173   | 0.1548 | 0.05      | 120 | H <sub>0</sub> retained |
| Intra-sentential    | Situational pattern    | Old   | 124.5 |        |           |     |                         |
| Inter-sentential    | Conversational pattern |       |       |        |           |     |                         |
|                     | Metaphoric pattern     |       |       |        |           |     |                         |

The table reveals the correlation between the age and code-switching patterns to be 0.1548 which shows no significant relationship at  $p \geq 0.05$ . This means that the patterns did not correlate significantly with age. Therefore the hypothesis which stated that “there was no significant relationship between the age of the speaker and code-switching patterns of Hausa-English bilinguals” is retained.

### Conclusion

The paper sets out to find the code-switching patterns and their pragmatic functions among Hausa speakers, using age as a variable. The findings showed

both structural and contextual switches. The structural patterns were inter, intra-sentential and tag switches. Contextual conversational, situational and metaphorical switches were also discovered. Code-switching has pragmatic functions such as emphasis, persuasion, translation and explanations. It is concluded that both young and older generations code-switch, that the switches are structural and contextual in nature and have pragmatic functions.

### Recommendations

From the conclusion drawn, the paper therefore is recommending that code-switching should not be frowned at, as it does not tamper with the structure of the language because it is not random, and has been shown, to have pragmatic functions in interpersonal communication. Tolerance of code-switching in informal settings and within the classroom to improve second language communicative competence is recommended. This is because allowing second language learners to code-switch in the classroom gives them the opportunity to become more comfortable with the second language. More researches on code-switching in Nigerian languages should be carried out to understand its nature and motivation.

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## **8. Negotiating the Local in the Global Context: Tooling the Nigerian Video Film for Language Empowerment and Cultural Preservation**

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Globalization, as the commanding height of the world, cannot be truncated. It will continue to diminish national sovereignty and attenuate indigenous autonomy. This will in turn weaken local languages and cultures, putting into consideration the lop-sided global calculus on which globalization is anchored. Since the concept is hinged on competitiveness derivable through comparative advantage, the discourse proposes, that since the Nigerian video film continues to be churned out at geometrical progression and it has been ferried across the Atlantic, it should be tooled to function beyond satisfying the domiciliary needs of Nigerians. The paper, therefore, interrogates the need for language plurality in the Nigerian filmic space, thereby proposing a fusion of the local and the global as a leeway from the language tangle in Nigeria.

### **Introduction**

Globalization as a social process has the propensity to disregard place, distance and time. Invariably, it becomes the central crisis of our age. A concept which was initially initiated by economists and social scientists, developed as a response to the emergence of a global economy grounded in modernization and fueled by expansion of western capitalism has moved from its initial interest in the emergence of a global economy towards an interest in globalization as a cultural phenomenon. Africans should not regard this shift as a simplistic reorganization of globalization studies around cultures rather than economics, this shift articulately evidences the reciprocal relation and the kinship between the economic and the cultural spheres, a recognition that cultures are exchanged along with commodities. This brings to bear the fact that one of the central points of globalization studies is the commodification of cultural forms like literature, cinema, television, live performance to mention a few. However, because of the asymmetrical global calculus, Africans are likely to languish at the periphery of globalization. Chimalum Nwankwo, (2006: 34) opines that “Globalization has become like the sun, powered by one source and shining down on the world from one fixed spot in the heavens”. Because of this lopsided global geometry it becomes imperative for Africans at large, and Nigeria in particular to workout pragmatic measures to meet the challenges of a globalizing world. As a new world order it is too formidable to be paused or truncated or even avoided. The world will continue to be lithe before the prescriptive economic cum political stand position of globalization. Since globalization advocates competitiveness through

comparative advantage, the Nigerian video film should be properly harnessed in sustaining Nigerian languages and cultures within the global sphere.

As the popularity of the Nigerian video film continues to grow, thereby creating a burgeoning interest for its heterogeneous enthusiastic public(s) it becomes imperative that this video landmass be given a truly national outlook. This will make it thrive beyond mere entertainment to an instrument that can help in the propagation and preservation of Nigerian cultures, and a veritable instrument for language empowerment. This does not mean an ostentatious display of Nigerian cultures and languages within this filmic space but as a measure for expediting the functionality of the languages. By this innovation the Nigerian filmmaker is not only a social activist and nationalist but also a curator of our cultures. Nigeria's policy on film leaves no doubt as to the social, cultural and political demands on the filmmaker.

Moreover, because of the challenges of globalization, the Nigerian filmic space continues to be a little Western. Even indigenous language films are no longer usually whole, unless gird in nomenclature that points to the global. Since people are watching the films, and globalization presages the demolition of national sovereignty, the eclectic dynamics of this video landmass should be harnessed for the empowerment of smaller languages that are always at the brink of excision. This discourse shall therefore interrogate the need for language plurality in the Nigerian filmic space thereby proposing a fusion of the local and the global as a leeway from the tangle.

### **Film as Instrument for Cultural Rearmament and Language Empowerment**

The thrust of this discourse is bifocal – the need for the preservation of Nigerian cultures and propagation of Nigerian languages through the video film on the one hand and the need for the ‘**glocalization**’ of films in Nigerian languages, most especially smaller languages and the deregulation of the Nigerian filmic enterprise on the other. As the Nigerian video film continues to flourish, it continues to be mono-directional in focus. Perhaps, the need to meet the challenges of globalization could be attributable for this lopsidedness – the need to be assessable to foreign audience, vis-à-vis the need for cultural homogeneity, which is the cardinal agenda of globalization.

The Nigerian video film from its chaste beginning in the late 1970s has burgeoned into a national art form. With the geometric progression with which films are churned out, it becomes apparent that it is the most effective medium for the promotion, propagation, preservation of culture and above all a veritable instrument for language empowerment. This video landmass does not only define Nigeria, but reflects Nigeria's postcolonial angst. This is what Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff (2000) describe as the anxiety of the post-colony. The temper this filmic enterprise espouses is what Karin Barber (1987:4) delineates as local narratives “about things that matter to people... Things that people want to hear”. This audio-visual practice describes a germane and an engaging space of social and cultural negotiation for its enthusiastic public(s). The audience sees the



realities of their existence “screen to face”, because they recognize this filmic space as their landscape.

By the end of the last quarter of the twentieth century, most scholars from the crucible of incessant research on the future of smaller languages of the world intimated the world about the gradual erosion of these languages from the capacity of functionality. They cautioned that if pragmatic solutions are not sort, such languages may be heading towards extinction. Dorian (1981) and (1989) Elemendorf (1981) are studies which glaringly articulate these fears. Their signal drew attention of the world to the catastrophe some languages may suffer if exigent measures are not taken to scotch the impending language disaster. Krauss (1992) estimated that by the twenty first century about 90% of mankind’s languages will suffer extinction. Scholars like Kay Willaimson, for fear of this scourge, admonishes speakers of smaller languages, “to use their language or lose their language” (1999:126). These scholars didn’t put into consideration the volatility of these languages before the virulent and contagious temper of globalization. The concept, which stems from an economic and political perspective, is geared towards de-emphasizing national sovereignty. Like a virus, it continues to grow and begin to tactically encompass other spheres of human endeavour. The concept is an off shoot of the western capitalism. Paul Jay (2001:34), remarks that globalization developed as a response to the emergence of a global economy grounded in modernization and fueled by the expansion of western capitalism. While Malcolm Waters (1995:10), rejects the simplistic notion that the driving force for global integration is restless capitalist expansionism. Without doubt, it becomes glaring that the issues of cultural crisis Africans have always suffered is being reformulated through globalization, which is geared towards westernizing and homogenizing the world culture which in turn becomes a threat to local cultures and by extension, smaller languages. It is therefore not accidental that globalization is labeled as the imperialism of the new world order. With the accelerating pace with which the world is globalizing, scholars like Emenanjo (2005: 16) laments that African “languages and Africa are really in grave danger.”

The West, America, India and China according to Rosamund Billington et al (1991:78), are “the main exporters of film to the Third World”. This is not because they have the paraphernalia for the production and distribution of films at their disposal, but they are aware of the energy of film as an instrument for change. Dul Johnson (1997:99), remarks that these nations appreciate “the power of film as a pipeline for culture”. Though African cultures are vibrant, Africans continue to suffer cultural hegemony because their cultures are circumscribed and prone to infiltration, which in turn ruptures their organic wholeness. Freire (1972:122-3) avers that:

Cultural conquest leads to the cultural inauthenticity of those who are invaded; they begin to respond to the valves, the standards, and the goals of the invaders ... for cultural invasion to succeed it is essential



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that those invaded become convinced of their intrinsic inferiority ... cultural invasion is on the one hand an instrument of domination, and on the other, the result of domination. This cultural action of a dominating character, in addition to being deliberate and planned, is in another sense simply a product of oppressive reality.

The issues of culture clash and culture imperialism are gradually becoming sterile as African scholars have begun to devote their energies to more relevant conceptual problems, like the compromised economy of African nations. The emergence of globalization studies makes these issues subject of continuous debate.

### **The Need for the ‘Glocalization’ of the Nigerian Filmic Space**

One pragmatic means of preventing smaller languages in Nigeria from *mortalating* is making them function as vehicle for expression in the video film. This proposition though Sisyphean, putting into consideration the commercial and economic base of film and the comparative advantage it guarantees, it is a veritable tool for culture preservation. However, if this filmic space is complexified and its horizon broadened, it will help in invaluable ways as an instrument for language empowerment. This proposition does not give the impression that the socialization role of the video film is simple and unambiguous. Rather, the process towards actualizing these goals are complex and mediated by other agencies of socialization in society. The need for employing a language with a criss-cross accessibility like the English language is imperative. The complexities of the relationship between video and other aspects of culture and economy become clearer when the dimension of the video film as a creation of our social and cultural framework are explored. If the dynamic energy of the video film is properly harnessed in empowering smaller languages and preserving and propagating Nigerian cultures, it will become glaringly apparent that the video film do not simply provide or increase our knowledge of the world but help us to make sense of it.

One pragmatic means of preventing small languages in Nigerian from vanishing from the language graph of the world is making them function through the Nigerian video film. Although the cinema during the colonial era was a hegemonic instrument for proselytizing, it is the Yoruba itinerant theatre that gave the Nigeria video landmass its present face. Afolabi Adesanya (1997:13) remarks that; “the involvement of the Yoruba travelling theatre practitioners in motion picture production was perhaps the most auspicious single factor in the evolution of an indigenous cinema in Nigeria”. The Itenarent Theater continues to be a rallying point when issues on the evolution of theatre and film in Nigeria are discussed because of its invigorating temperament at the level of language employed and the projection of the Yoruba culture in such a sedulous unrefined wholeness. The troupes and their art were so endearing because of the local

markers of the savage beauty of the art which gives it a holistic distinction making it a discrete tradition.

The three major Nigerian languages have taken advantage of the eclecticism of the video film to facilitate the propagation of their cultures and making the languages function within the filmic space. However, films in Ibo and Hausa have not been able to maintain the organic wholeness of Yoruba video film.

Filmmakers should help in the preservation and propagation of Nigerian languages and cultures by screening films in smaller languages, with translation to give them a global outlook on the one hand, and preventing them from *mortalating* on the other. Studies show that the audiences are active rather than passive in this filmic enterprise. This video landmass is a veritable tool for transferring knowledge through indigenous languages most especially the smaller ones to the target audience. This film phenomenon functions as means of oral expression when their problems are presented through the films. Video film serves as means of preserving tradition and inculcating established values. They enable the audience to come to terms with new social and political situation. The Nigerian video film which has recently been labeled *Nollywood* Production, possesses a great dissemination potential, because it does not require the audience to be in very close physical proximity to the materials in which the message are embedded. They are not distant and abstract as most media for learning and acquiring languages and preserving culture. The films bring together sight and hearing across the whole spectrum of colour and sounds, and they are able to deal with events as they occur.

Since language and religion are major elements of culture, it becomes imperative that smaller languages should be considered during film production. This will in turn give the filmic space a national out look. Ndimele (2005:69) admonishes speakers of smaller languages to do everything humanly possible to rescue their languages from the brink of excision. Film production in smaller Nigerian languages is therefore an area that is still largely unexplored. Apart from the Igbo and Yoruba, filmmakers from the south-south zone are major key players in the film enterprise, most especially as most of the producers and directors are from that geo-political zone. Just like the Igbo, their heavy presence in the space has not helped in the realization of a standard film in any of the languages from that zone. One film that has cartographically positioned the Urhobo language on the filmic geography is *Onome*. The film though titled in Urhobo does not foreground the need for the propagation of the Urhobo Language or the preservation of the culture. The actors and actresses featured in the film are unable to pronounce their Urhobo names properly. What is rather produced is anglicized version of the names. The concerns of the film are complex, bordering more on the complexities of cosmopolitan life and the persistent struggle between man and his hostile environment.

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**Agenda Screening: Local Tactics for Containing Global Strategies**

As stated earlier, filmmakers need not teach a language within the filmic space and time. This may fatigue the audience interest because the film will be reduced to a pedagogic pedestal. One means of inserting such agenda into a film is through *agenda screening*. This technique is pedagogic in intension yet the entertainment criterion is sustained. Usually this agenda may just appear as a sub-plot not necessarily the main plot yet it doesn't neuter the entire film. The technique is mutually harmonized into the filmic process.

The local tactics to contain global strategies for the *englishification* of Nigerian films is through 'agenda screening'. Since the films can be read from varied dimensions, the producers and directors can help in determining the agenda since no producer or director may want to screen a film basically to teach a language most especially considering the audience that is likely to get board easily. Such film may become too pedestrian. In determining the agenda, filmmakers can help peddle the issue to a monumental position within the context and framework of the film by employing a mnemonic device. The film will then structure our definition of the situation, what can or cannot be taken to be important. To make this device more explanatory, the discourse will attempt an analysis of an indigenous film in Urhobo language in order to enunciate the theoretical base of the device.

The touchstone of the technique is an Urhobo film *Konojuwe*. The film does not admonish the audience to speak the Urhobo Language, but one of the subplots of the narrative has that as a capital agenda. Though the film is capricious in temper switching from moralistic themes to cultural, yet the capital agenda becomes the capillary that propels the film to a monumental position.

The film has a local appellation. Its message and content are universal, yet the main plot is the skimpiest, wherein the main intension of the film is localized. Unlike the Igbo and Hausa film with pastiche of western stories, *Konojuwe* is acted wholly in Urhobo, living no room for culture coalition. Like all most Nigerian films, *Konojuwe* tells many stories and could be read from multifarious dimensions. The main story can be fragmented into bits and pieces as they move in diverse directions. However, it is Ekwetakufia, the protagonist that couples the fragmental bits and pieces into the grand narrative. The film begins with its main plot, the need for the propagation of Urhobo culture and the empowerment of the language. The sound track attests to the above, assertion. Kay Williamson (1999:162) admonishes speakers of smaller language to take the destiny of their language in their hands by ensuring that their "children are adequately exposed to it and retain it as their home language to pass on to the next generation". As his name implies, Urhobobrano refuses to allow his wealthy son, Ovwigho to venture into his hometown for fear of being witch haunted by his clansmen, thereby, sustaining his son within an alienated and diasporic space. By this innovation Urhobobrano strips his son of everything indigenous – his language and culture. He even deprives him from erecting structures in his hometown, even when he has erected mansions abroad. His father's refusal to allow him erect mansions at home

is not only symbolic, but also a metaphor of his deprivation from contributing to the development and empowerment of the Urhobo language and culture. This notion is made bare by Ekwetakufia, the High Chief of the community, as he laments the sudden and untimely demise of Ovwigho. Urhobobrano does not see anything spectacular in allowing his son identify with his language and culture.

Urhobobrano gets news from Lagos of his son's death. Instantly he begins to lament his folly for depriving his son from any filial connection with his home. He becomes abashed as his late son is stripped of all burial entitlements because of his occidentalism. His grand children who he may never see are not only lost to him, but also dislocated from the cultural and linguistic geography of Urhobo, and this in turn endangers the language. Brining to bear Bamgbose (1993:29) proclamation: "When all is said and done the fate of an endangered language may well lie in the hands of the owners of the language themselves and in their will to make it survive". Although the film relies on the invocation of pre-existing stasis about the Urhobo culture, the message of the film is well tailored to its audience. The sound track is very functional, as it does not only give the film its cultural categorization and unconditionality, it unambiguously articulates the message. Above all, the etymology of the names of actors and actresses most especially Urhobobrano gives credence to the intention and thrust of the film.

### Conclusion

Charles Larson (2006: 1) contends that, "all great literature, by extension art should be firmly rooted in the cultural foundations of the writer" (emphasis mine). *Things Fall Apart* occupies a canonical position in African and world literature today not because of Chinua Achebe's desire to become rich and famous but because the book connects Achebe to his cultural roots and, therefore, to his country men. Art dislocated from its cultural base is meaningless. Aestheticism is important but art should anchor around its culture as its rallying point, and only then can such art effectively promote and propagate culture. Since the Nigerian video landmass has created an enthusiastic heterogeneous audience, the eclectic dynamics of this phenomenon should be harnessed to empower smaller languages. Films should be screened in these languages by employing the agenda screening technique. Although this discourses does not subscribe to the notion that entertainment should be subordinated to culture, nor does it lose sight of the economic factors of screening, rather, the two are profoundly interdependent. The proposition is that since Nigerian filmmakers are arduously struggling to rid the art of any subsistence outlook in order to meet global challenges, they should also remember that it is the savage fidelity with which the films are relayed that make them invigorating and virile. When films are screened Nigerians should be able to assess them; Africans across the continent should be able to assess them; and finally, audience outside Africa should be able to do the same. No matter what is screened, the audience should be able to categorize such film as a great film, a great Nigerian film. One way to do this is to ensure the Nigerian video film heads in the direction of greater cosmopolitanism and greater insularity at the same time.

Much as the English language and its culture are of immense importance to the Nigerian filmic space, it is imperative that the need to make programmatic commitment to incorporate indigenous languages most especially smaller ones into this filmic space as medium of expression should be a fiat. Through this innovation the Nigerian video landmass will meet global standard and at the same time satisfy the need of the local. If this commitment is not considered, Nigerian languages and cultures will continue to be marginal within the screening space and time. Language and culture are the most mutable of human creation; like their speakers, they show no regard for borders, and like the imagination, they defy predictability and repression, therefore, the Nigerian video film should remain obdurately and spectacularly Nigerian.

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## **9. Nigerian Languages as Instrument for Conflict Resolution & Peace for National Development**

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Nigeria is a multi-lingual society. In the interest of the national unity, the Federal Government stated that the three major Nigerian languages should be taught and learnt in the institutions of learning in the country. We also have quite a large number of minority languages. A proper handling of these indigenous languages will definitely enhance peaceful co-existence among the Nigerian citizenry. It will also aid in minimizing some conflicts that exist in our country due to the plural nature of our nation. It is the position of this paper that efforts have to be made by government at all levels, as well as individuals to use the instrumentality of these indigenous languages to promote peace and settlement of conflicts in Nigeria.

### **Introduction**

Language is always around us, in our speech, in writing, in remembering a conversation, in our dreams and even as we meditate over a problem. It is one of the greatest attributes and gift given to man. According to Hornby,

Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communication by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols or in a written term.

Through language, one expresses one's thoughts, relates with others in the society and carries one's day to day life activities. According to Ibiowotisi (1998:218), it is chiefly through language that human communities control and change their structures and create institutions which embody their aspirations and shape their lives. Of a truth, it is through language that human race influence and change situations around them by developing appropriate structures and institutions that constitute their aspirations and so shape their lives for proper development. According to him,

It has been proved beyond reasonable doubt that without language, there can be no human society, education or even human being.... Civilization and National Development

The role of language in human kingdom cannot be over-emphasized. This is because it runs through all aspects of human endeavours and shapes activities, civilization and development. Accordingly, our indigenous languages have a lot to do in enhancing our development as a nation.

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According to Senam (1998:107),

... beside the domain of education.... other field of human endeavour where Nigerian languages are being used are music, drama, farming, trading, hunting, preaching, political campaigns, settlement of conflicts, persuasion, dissuasion and architecture.

He asserts that in most of these domains, both major and minority languages have equal communication potency and popular acceptance across linguistic boundaries. The above statements reveal that if we carefully handle our dear indigenous languages, they can yield a lot of fruits that will lead to national unity, which will in turn enhance development in all its tenets.

Now, the concern of this paper is to determine effective ways in which Nigerian languages can be used as an instrument of peace and settlement of conflicts in Nigeria for national development. However, before we delve into that realm, we shall try to look into the number of languages that are indigenous in Nigerian. A huge number of our experts have carried out various researches to determine the exact number of indigenous languages that we have in Nigeria. However, no definite mathematical accuracy has been recorded due to the multi-linguistic nature of our country. So, according to Matemilola (1998:74), eminent scholars such as Banjo (1975), Tomori (1973), Bamgbose (1971) and (1977), have attempted giving numbers ranging from 200 – 500 indigenous languages.

The result of these research experts clearly reveals to us that Nigeria is indeed a plural society. In spite of this, we can still forge ahead as a nation and achieve outstanding development, if we as a country should handle the issue pertaining to our indigenous language with utter carefulness.

### **The Issue of Mother Tongue in our Education and the National Policy in Education**

First and foremost, mother tongue can be said to be the first language a child comes in contact with in his life. It is the language of the immediate environment that a child finds himself at birth. It is always mostly the language of his parents.

According to Olaoye (2002:7-8), the roles of mother tongue have been identified thus:

- Instrumental function
- Regulatory function
- Interactional function
- Personal function
- Heuristic function
- Representational function

The function of mother tongue is instrumental in nature, because through the use of it things are done as directed. It is equally used to regulate people's behaviours

and also for interactive purposes. As well, through the use of mother tongue, a child explores himself for individual or self identification. Heuristically, he explores reality and solves problems practically through the instrumentality of his mother tongue.

It is also a vehicle through which many ideas or concepts surrounding a child which have no physical existence are imagined. Mother tongue is also symbolic, because through it, a child can convey messages or information and also expresses proposition.

From the crucial roles of mother tongue outlined above, it becomes imperative that its use in a formal school system while educating the child in his formative years has a far-reaching returns. This is because for proper development of a child in his academic pursuit, it is absolutely essential that the language of the school and that of the home (mother tongue) should not vary in any way at least within the first three years of his primary education.

In support of this, Akinbobola (1998:29) points out that in UNESCO meeting of 1951, it was submitted that the teaching and the use of the child's mother tongue aid actualization of his potentials and this enables him to learn faster ahead of the child who has been taught in a foreign or a second language. Fafunwa (1982:293) strongly believes that mother tongue is as natural to a child as his mother's milk. To this end, it is absolutely necessary that the foundation of a child's educational pursuit should be laid on the bedrock of his mother.

It is on the bases of this that the National Policy on Education (NPE) recommended that a language of a child's immediate environment should be used as a language of instruction in the first three years of his primary education.

In Nigeria, we have a lot of mother tongues or indigenous languages. The concern of this paper then, is how these numerous mother tongues or indigenous languages can be used as instrument of peace and settlement of conflicts in Nigeria for national development.

Pertaining to the unity of this great nation and the issue of the Nigerian languages, the Federal Government emphasizes the teaching and learning of the three major Nigerian languages in 1981 revised *National Policy on Education* (1981:9). The Policy states that:

In addition to appreciating the importance of language in educational process, and as a means of preserving the people's culture, the government considers it to be in the interest of the national unity that each child should be encouraged to learn one of the three major languages other than his mother tongue. In this connection, the government considers the three major languages in Nigeria to be Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

In this specification, the emphasis is on "should be encouraged". It therefore signifies that the child should be motivated to learn one of the three major Nigerian languages other than his mother tongue, because that is the best thing to

do, as it will help in securing national unity among the Nigerian citizenry if properly handled. In fact, encouraging the Nigerian children to learn one of the three major languages in Nigeria other than their mother tongues effectively, will within some decades make a lot of Nigerians to be proficient in these three languages. This step will reduce conflicts or misunderstanding inherent in Nigeria due to the plurality of languages and tribal sentiments. It will also help in fostering the national unity we have long envisaged for.

In the country, we have various problems ranging from mistrust, suspicion, fear of domination, ethnic rivalry, acrimony, war, to coups and counter coups. All these are evidences of discord among Nigerians. It is undoubtedly believed that people understand one another better when they communicate in one language. And we all know that understanding enhances unity.

Now, our line of argument is not only that the teaching and learning of the three major languages in Nigeria by the Nigerian children will make the Nigerian populace to communicate in these languages in the near future, it will also reduce tension which is built up by misunderstanding due to the multi-linguistic nature of our country. As well, it will equally help us to discover that we Africans, and Nigerians, in particular have similar cultural, political, economic and social heritage which is embedded in our languages for astounding national development.

### **Effective use of Nigerian Languages as an Instrument of Peace and Settlement of Conflicts in Nigeria for National Development**

Government Should More Seriously Encourage the Study of Nigerian Languages as Second Languages (L<sub>2</sub>). Finnocchiario and Boromo (1973) are of the view that the overall goals of learning a second/foreign language are for effective communication and cultural understanding. Now, concerning our context, it can equally or rightly be argued that the goals of learning a Nigerian language as a second language are also for effective communication and inter-cultural understanding.

In the *National Cultural Policy* (1988: 5), culture is rightly defined as the:

“... totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempts to meet the challenges of living in their environment which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms and modes of organization, thus, distinguishing the people from their neighbours”.

Looking deeply into our different cultures, we come to realize that they inculcate moral norms, discipline, law and order, entertainment and social togetherness among its citizens. They also inculcate human virtues such as diligence, obedience, honesty, hard work, endurance or perseverance, chastity among young unmarried women and faithfulness. On the other hand, negative attitudes such as

stealing, cursing one another, laziness, greediness, lying, backbiting, rumour mongering, money laundering, hatred, jealousy, prostitution etc are condemned.

Then, through a more serious encouragement of the study of the Nigerian languages as second languages (L<sub>2</sub>) by the government, the learners or students who will later develop into mature adults and future leaders of our dear country, will definitely understand all these similarities that exist in our cultures and make proper use of them for our national development. In this view, instead of language and culture being used as instruments of destruction and anarchy, they will rather be used as instruments of mutual understanding, national integration and development.

As a result, the need for the three major Nigerian languages to be studied as second languages is very urgent, as this will be used as a weapon to foster unity in Nigeria. Students studying these languages in our tertiary institutions should be given incentives in form of bursary awards and scholarships as sources of encouragement. This will enhance more enrolment.

### **The Place of Mass Media in Projecting Nigerian Languages as a Means of Creating Awareness and Achieving Peace in Nigeria.**

Adesuyan (1998:116) points out that government's programmes are better understood via indigenous languages. He further buttressed this point by adding that, that is why some vital documents are being translated into major Nigerian languages to really get to the hearts of the people. Instances of these are the national constitution and manifestoes of political parties as well as information which borders on political, social, economic, religious and moral lives of the people.

As a matter of urgency, in order to achieve lasting peace and unity in this great giant of Africa (Nigeria), effort should be made by government at all levels and individuals, to translate and publish relevant documents that borders on people's lives not only in the three major Nigerian languages, but also in all our indigenous languages that have developed official orthographies.

Besides, both major and minority languages should be used in broadcasting on television and radio as this will in turn lead to high degree of penetration, since a single broadcast can reach millions of people within a very short period. Other print media such as newspapers, magazines etc. should not be left out in dissemination of information in our various Nigerian languages.

When properly exploited, this forum can be used in mass mobilization programmes. Thus, when adequate awareness has been created and the masses properly mobilized, the resultant effect is that it can lead to national consciousness, unity and development.

### **Exploiting Linguistic Similarities in Nigerian Languages as a Bases of Uniting Nigerians for Development**

In 1963, Greenberg classified the African languages into these major phyla:



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- Afro-Asiatic
  - Khoisan
  - Niger-Kordofanian/Congo
  - Nilo-saharan.

Various researches have proved that we have representatives of these phyla in Nigeria with the exclusion of Khoisan.

According to Hansford et al (1976:16), as disclosed by Elugbe (1990:12), and that of the Greenberg (1963), the acceptance is that the ancestors of the multifarious languages in Nigeria can be traced to only three ancestral languages such as Afro-Asiatic, Niger-Kordofanian/Congo and Nilo-saharan.

In the words of Arohunmolase (1998:23):

Linguists who are philologists use these three classifications to show that all the languages under each phylum above sprang from a common ancestor and that they are related.

He ended by adding that if these languages under each phylum are related, we can make use of those relationships to forge national unity among such related languages. Elugbe (1990:12) supports this view when he made the following statement:

It is thus left to Nigerians to see only a few groups or hundreds thereof in Nigeria. It is my belief that the ancestral ties between scores (even hundreds) of these indigenous languages can be exploited to show Nigerians that they have a common history in fact.

Research experts such as Greenberg (1963) and Elugbe (1990:12), have disclosed that languages in Nigeria such as Edo, Fulani, Kambari, Yoruba, Igala, Igbo and Tiv belong to the Niger-Kordofanian/Congo family. Also, languages such as Igala, Edo, Igbo, Yoruba which are under the Kwa group of languages are related. In fact, some of them exhibit some evidences of linguistic similarities Armstrong (1964). He is of the view that the time difference between Igbo and Yoruba is probably in the neighbourhood of 4,000 – 6,000 years.

Following the trend of issues discovered from the researches made so far, it is the opinion of the writer that our dear Nigerians should make proper use of these linguistic evidences so discovered to quench the fire of antagonism besieging Nigeria, and forge ahead for national unity and development.

### **Developing the Minority Languages in order to Foster National Unity and Development**

Due to the plural nature of this nation, the Federal Government emphasizes the teaching and learning of the three major Nigerian Languages in 1981 revised *National Policy on Education* (1981:9), the National Policy states that:

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... in addition to appreciating the importance of language in educational process, and as a means of preserving the people's culture, the government considers it to be in the interest of the national unity that each child should be encouraged to learn one of the three major languages other than his mother tongue. In this connection, the government considers the three major languages in Nigeria to be Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

From the above statement, it implies that the government makes provisions for the teaching and learning of the three major languages in Nigeria. It also promotes their growth and development by sponsoring the designing of their curricula and the production of instructional materials to facilitate their teaching and learning. This is highly commendable and should even be taken more seriously as stated earlier in this paper. However, it is the opinion of the writer that government at all levels in the country should encourage the teaching and learning of the minority languages in Nigeria from the pre-primary, primary through secondary to tertiary levels of education in the country. Government should also aid in the development of proper orthographies of those minority languages whose orthographies have not been properly development. It should also aid in sponsoring the development of curricula and instructional materials for teaching and learning of these languages. These will discourage their extinction and enhance their teaching and learning.

These steps will no doubt minimize or completely remove some antagonistic conflicts that sometimes occur due to the linguistic differences that exist among the Nigerian citizenry.

### **Minimizing some Conflicts at the End-Product of the Educational System.**

A large number of Nigerians are left unemployed at the completion of their studies in the higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. Concerning the Nigerian languages graduates both at N. C. E. or University level, the reverse is mostly the case, as most of these graduates are readily employed as teachers of Nigerian languages at all levels of education in the country. They are also being absorbed by media houses as newscasters, editors etc. This surely reduces the crises and conflicts caused by unemployment in our nation.

### **Conclusion**

Due to the plural nature of our nation, coupled with the fact that the unity of the country is of the utmost importance, the Federal Government stated that the three major Nigerian languages should be studied in the institutions of learning in Nigeria. There are also quiet a large number of minority languages.

A proper handling of these languages will definitely enhance peaceful co-existence among different ethnic groups in Nigeria. It will also aid in minimizing some conflicts that occur in this nation due to the multi-lingual nature of our country.

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## **10. Nigerian Languages and the Millennium Development Goals: The Way Forward**

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Education is an instrument par-excellence for meaningful transformation of a society. The reality, however, is that such functional education should be packaged in the mother tongue (MT) of the learner or the language of the immediate community (LIC). The thrust of this paper therefore is to re-conceptualise the notion of people about the Mother-Tongue (MT) policy of Government in education. In view of the fact that educational development must be consciously and strategically planned, the paper recommends that concerted efforts should be expended by all stakeholders in education to ensure that the Mother-Tongue Education Policy is pursued vigorously so as to achieve its intended educational goals, most especially the Millennium Development Goals.

### **Introduction**

Virtually all countries of the world are bracing up for the challenges of modern life. Nigeria should not be an exception. Highly effective schools and improved student/pupil outcomes should be the key objectives of Government. This is because education of the highest quality is the foundation for the future of the country. Education, is it that empowers any nation to rise to the challenges of social, cultural, economic and technological change.

Building human capital has been recognized in recent times as crucial to the overall development of any nation. The best thing Nigeria can give to its citizens is quality education which opens the doors to development and progress. The importance of developing human capital cannot be over-emphasized as it acts as a catalyst for change for a better future for individuals to realize their full potentials in the acquisition of knowledge and skills. To corroborate this, President Clinton of the United States of America stated emphatically that:

... education of the citizens and citizenship is essential to creating a worldwide middle class. It is essential to global prosperity. It is essential to fulfilling the most basic needs of the human body and spirit. That is why the 21st century must be the century of education and century of teachers.

To corroborate this, Scholars like Ikenga-Metuh (1997), Walson-Jack (1999), Yusuf (1995), Gana (1999), and Soyinka state that the best way to change the Nigerian situation and strengthen our democracy and meet the challenges of this

millennium is to guarantee a universal, qualitative and excellent citizenship education for every child in this country.

The important resource of any nation today therefore, is its human capital and it is well accepted that education drives human capital development. In realization of this basic fact, discerning governments across the world invest preferentially in education, conscious that education is “the hen that lays the golden egg”. In Nigeria, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) recognizes education as a vital transformational tool and a formidable instrument for socio-economic empowerment. While for primary and secondary education, NEEDS recognizes them as critical foundational training opportunities essential in equipping the youths for a challenging future.

Functional education and specialized training are the universal pre-requisites for trained workforce, quality leadership, public morality and industrial harmony in all spheres of human life. Effective teachers armed with good personality and professionalism therefore constitute a vital force to reckon with in the dissemination of relevant knowledge, skills and habits for sustainable human development. However, in Nigeria today, education has been counter-productive because it has undergone rapid changes with attendant policy somersault and implementation problems that arise mainly from lack of sufficient political will to foster educational development for the improvement of individuals and society. It is therefore important that educational development must be consciously and strategically planned.

The need to rapidly enhance education delivery in quantity and quality at all levels has prompted governments (particularly at the federal and state levels) to adopt reform measure. Nigeria, being a signatory to the Millennium Development Goal’s declaration has since evolved diverse reform measures to ensure the attainment of the goals by the target date of 2015 (*See Appendix*).

The current reform in Compulsory Universal Basic Education in the country is embedded in Education For All (EFA) and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) framework among others.

These have re-shaped educational thoughts and practices in Nigeria as illustrated in the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). The NEEDS is Nigeria’s plan for prosperity. It has four main goals: Wealth creation, Employment generation, poverty reduction and Value orientation. In response to the global initiatives in particular; the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA), Nigeria adopted the 9-year Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme. This was backed up by an Act of parliament in 2004 which led to the establishment of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC). The 9-year Basic Education is free and compulsory and geared to achieving the relevant targets of MDG, EFA and NEEDS. Thus a number of new policies and initiatives have emerged (Obioma, 2004). The curriculum now focuses on strategic basic contents for the achievement of the country’s reform initiatives in value-orientation, poverty eradication, wealth generation and job creation.



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The organizers of this conference, presumably, are aware and concerned about the emergent issues in our society, the majority of which are quite disturbing and threatening to the corporate existence of this great nation of ours. Their attention must have been drawn to the prevailing needs of the society and would like to use educational fora to change the societal focus.

**Implications for Curriculum Implementers**

Quality factors in education are indispensable for excellence in education for the development of the human resource base needed to catapult Nigeria into an enviable position in the comity of nations. The National Policy on Education (NPE, revised 2004) is the government's concrete commitment to education. Lockheed and Vespoor (1990) assert that: "Providing quality education for children in Primary schools is a pre-requisite for developing the resource base required to meet the changing demands of twenty-first century.

Today, Nigeria is grappling with a number of issues that call for careful and proper enlightenment of the citizenry. In any community, the first step towards cultural, economic and political advancement is the literacy level of the citizenry. There is probably no better means of actualizing this than "Education" using language as its medium. The rate of the literacy achievement would be dictated by the choice of language of instruction. Hence, if the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and rapid development is desired, the education of the generality of the people should be carried out at the first and second levels, in the mother tongue (MT) or language of the immediate community (LIC). The implication of this is that at this period of Nigeria's cultural reawakening, the importance of language cannot be over-emphasized, a continental or sub-continental lingua franca notwithstanding.

To corroborate this, UNESCO at the seventeenth session of the General Conference adopted a ten-year plan for the study of African oral traditions and the promotion of African languages. Having aware thus of the importance of African languages, national and home languages in particular, encourage their use as medium and subject of instruction in Africa. Hence, education and language form one inseparable entity. This must have informed the Federal Government of Nigeria to consider it in the interest of National unity to incorporate the teaching and learning of Nigerian languages in its educational and cultural policies.

In spite of the important role of language in education, the present scenario in Nigeria today reflects language instability as one of the most striking shortfall of the Nigerian educational system. Despite the language provision in both National Policy on Education and the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, it is rather very unfortunate that the provision is bedeviled with many pedagogical constraints.

The recognition of mother-tongue in Nigerian educational system as heralded in the National Policy on Education is not unconnected with the general function of language in human life. It is sad to note that majority of our educational policies are mere paper tiger. To achieve a virile language education programme may



become an illusion if we fail to take cognizance of the place of language in our educational schemes.

It has become very necessary to draw the attention of the general public to the fact that mother-tongue education had been accorded recognition internationally as most advanced countries like Germany, Japan, India, Russia, among others compelled our children to spend some months to study the language of their countries before their pursuit of education in those countries. This is because mother-tongue i.e. their local language is the medium of instruction in schools. Confirming the superiority of mother-tongue to foreign language is the fact that not only do children instructed in mother-tongue perform better, even those who could not perform well when the medium of instruction is English do better when the medium becomes their mother –tongue.

UNESCO in his pedagogical, psychological and sociological arguments, has for long championed the cause of education in indigenous languages. In a report released in 1953, it asserts:

It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his Mother-tongue. Psychologically, it is the system of meaning signs. That in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically; it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which he belongs. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium. (UNESCO 1953:11)

If the Government aims at achieving the Millennium Development Goals, it is important to note that it is high time we take the bull by the horn, all hands should be on deck by all educational policy makers, implementers, parents, guardians and students to remove every hindrances to the successful implementation of language provision in the national policy on education, ranging from infrastructural, pedagogical, interest, high level manpower, among others. Virtually all countries of the world are bracing up for the challenges of modern life. Nigeria must not be an exception. Efforts should be geared at improving the quality factors in our educational system.

Attainment of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) goals and Millennium Development Goals require adoption of mother tongue (MT) or Language of immediate Community and a high quality teaching workforce. The quality and quantity of supply of language teachers are yet not adequate generally. The challenge of quality and quantity of language teachers should be paramount to educational planners and administrators. Certain dynamics of change are necessary in the implementation of Nigerian languages provision in education. If Nigeria must get the best hands for the most effective delivery of its educational package, there is need to remove all the factors leading to the public perception of Nigerian languages and the teachers. The problem of inadequate supply of professional

Nigerian languages teachers in schools should be solved ones and for all. This will enhance the achievement of Millennium Development Goals. (*See Appendix*).

The teacher occupies a central position in curriculum implementation. Government should approve the expansion of enrolment of Nigerian languages in all Colleges of Education, Faculties of Education, Department of Nigerian languages and linguistics in the Universities and Polytechnics to establish Departments of language Arts/Communication for the study of Nigerian languages. There are a lot of Nigerian languages teachers out there waiting to be recruited, government to mass recruit and even adopt teacher exchange programme with some element of incentive to retain them on the job. In order to allay the fears of teachers who participate in this programme, efforts should be made to absorb these teachers into the service of the host state at the end of the programme period.

Another means of solving the problem of shortage of high level manpower in the area of Nigerian languages is to offer bursary award to any individual who wishes to study any of the three major Nigerian languages other than his/her own mother tongue at the tertiary level. Workshops should be mounted for such interested already trained to University degree level in Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba languages, since their pre-service University training up to the present time did not include the methodology of teaching a Nigerian language i.e. Bachelor of Arts in languages. Moreover, if language programme is included in the teacher education courses, steady and continuous supply of teachers capable of employing the language in question for effective teaching would be guaranteed. To update the skill of the teacher after the initial training, refresher courses could be organized periodically to introduce teachers to new language programmes, methodology and in-depth knowledge of the structure, orthography and other aspects of language. Attitude of individual Nigerians towards Nigerian languages should be checked. Positive attitudes are needed not only by the trained teachers and the motivated learners but also by the parents and guardians and the public at large. In view of the fact that a child understands better, faster and perform well when he is taught in the Mother tongue (MT) or Language of Immediate Community (LIC) than when he is taught in a Foreign language such as English, For instance: (The Ife Six Year Primary Project (1976),

a high-powered monitoring team should be constituted to monitor the implementation of language provisions in order to ensure the achievement of the intended Millennium Development Goals.

The teachers of Nigerian languages too must remove the seeming inferiority complex and compete aggressively with their counterparts in Law, Engineering, Medicine, among others, asserting that language, after all, is senior and superior to any other discipline under the sun.

## **Conclusion**

The paper has reflected on Nigerian languages and the Millennium Development Goals in any meaningful educational programme. It has reflected on education and

language situation in Nigeria. It identifies some problems militating against the successful implementation of language provision in the National Policy on Education. We have stated that education of the highest quality requires teachers of the highest quality. With the new trend in school programme and the demand for the inclusion of African languages in education from the grassroots of the school system, the contents of language teacher education programme call for fresh orientation and greater dynamism. Nigeria is at present, in a complex and professionally demanding environment for teachers' work most especially in the area of languages. In order to have quality teachers of Nigerian languages, Government should embark on quality Teacher programmes as a matter of urgency. Continuous development of Nigerian languages teachers should also be put in place. Such a programme will afford the language teachers in our school system to participate in refresher courses during the holidays. The need to provide good orientation for teachers in our schools is highly relevant and should be consistently encouraged and vigorously pursued by all and sundry.

The paper identified some problems militating against the use of mother-tongue in education in Nigeria. Solutions were proffered in the process. The paper is of the view that English language to an average Nigerian should be regarded as an occasional language not a dominant one. As a result, there should be a radical change of attitude by all and sundry to the use and development of Nigerian languages so as to enable them perform more meaningful functional roles in spheres of the nation's life. Most especially in education as mother-tongue in education contributes to the upliftment of educational standards and literacy rates.

The paper concludes with the view that to move the country along the right path of development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and to be able to live up to the challenges requires funding, committal, focus, constant evaluation and rendition of education delivery in the language the citizenry is familiar with. This will enhance the achievement of Millennium Development goals.

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**Appendix****The Millennium Development Goals**

- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger – Halve the proportion of people whose income less than a dollar a day, and halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.
- Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education – Ensure that all boys and girls can complete a full course of primary schooling.
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women – eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferable by 2005, and at all levels of education no later than 2015.
- Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality – Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five.
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health – Reduce by three-quarters the maternal mortality ratio
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Disease – Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.
- Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability – Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and Programmes and reverse the losses of environmental resources. Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Achieve by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers
- Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for Development – This goal has seven targets and calls for an open, rule-based trading and financial system, more generous aid to countries committed to reducing poverty, and relief for the debt problems of developing countries. The goal draws attention to the problems of the least developed countries and of landlocked countries and small island developing states, which have greater difficult competing in the global economy. It also calls for cooperation with the private sector to address youth unemployment, ensure access to affordable, essential drugs, and make available the benefits of new technologies.

Source: United Nations, “UN Millennium Development Goals”  
([www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals)).

# 11. Meaning and Content in HIV/AIDS Sensitisation Campaigns in Nigeria: Missing Links or Misplaced Priorities?

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The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria has resulted in the explosion of sensitisation campaigns and advertisements on the pandemic and its scourge. The variety of programmes and information disseminated, both in print and electronic media create the impression of a pandemic that is under tight control. But then, health communicators and health care campaigners connected with this sensitive, socio-politically laden phenomenon have obviously still a lot of hurdles to cross if they are to be masters of their words in this endeavour. For one, such campaigns are directed at different kinds of audiences with different objectives in mind. This diversity obviously leaves a lot of room for discordances and missing links in the messages, which have the potential for negatively affecting the actions and reactions of their recipients. Added to this is the conspicuous near absence of most Nigerian languages in these adverts. To ascertain the implications of these factors for the effectiveness of such campaigns, this paper subjects printed materials on these adverts/campaigns to a sociolinguistic and critical linguistic analyses. Based on this, it is argued that such campaigns do not fully achieve the desired effect. This can be blamed on the choice of words and style in the use of English, which is the dominant language used for this purpose and the choice of a language that is accessible to the target populace along with its socio-cultural constraints/limitations in objectively and adequately discussing a topic of this nature. Based on its findings, the paper concludes by reiterating that just as ignorance is a crucial factor in the spread of HIV/AIDS, the enlightenment campaigns themselves, when inadequately framed or translated, could have a reverse, negative effect from what they are meant to achieve.

## **Introduction**

This paper uses the method of Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) to analyse written texts on HIV/AIDS sensitization campaigns in Nigeria, with a view to assessing the extent to which the messages achieve their intended aims as par audience reception, interpretation and reaction. This is done against the background of the proliferation of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria, which has in turn given room to the explosion of sensitization campaigns and advertisements on the pandemic and its scourge. In doing this, health communicators and health care campaigners connected with this sensitive, socio-politically laden phenomenon have obviously still a lot of hurdles to cross if they are to be masters of their words in this activity, especially since their job requires coming to terms with a number of factors like topic, context, setting etc, whose variables can not be easily compromised. For, unlike in face to face communication, where interlocutors have



the advantage of immediate feedback that enables them to modify and reinforce the message or its wordings, this kind of information delivery involves unseen audiences whose backgrounds vary in many respects and whose reactions can therefore only be – at best – conjectured. What makes it even more complicated is the fact that being a matter of life and death, campaigners cannot afford the luxury of embellishments and apparent falsehoods which make products or services advertisements so attractive and persuasive. Thus, their target audiences often miss the point of what they are meant to be aware of. This situation is confounded further by the fact that most of the target audiences are better reached, or communicated to in their local/major Nigerian languages, which appear to have been overwhelmed by English.

Consequently, quite a number of questions about HIV/AIDS in Nigeria still remain unsatisfactorily answered, as far as the (largely unenlightened) populace is concerned, although it is not in doubt that the scare/fear of the virus is deep-rooted in anybody having access to information about it. But then, such information, if anything, has generated some debate bordering, (strangely enough) on the issue of the realness of HIV/AIDS, its origin, cure and even the drugs that are believed to allay its devastating effect, including who may or may not cure or contract the virus/syndrome. Hence it remains an everyday topic of discussion, a very fertile ground for the emergence of many NGOs, whose campaigns are directed at different kinds of audiences with different objectives in mind: those who are HIV/AIDS positive are enjoined to take it easy and rest assured that this is not ‘the end of the world’; while on the other hand, those that are negative are warned of the devastating effect of this killer disease that has no known cure and therefore advised to do all they could to stay away from it, even though they are at the same time called upon not to stay away from those who carry the virus, which, by the way, is transferable.

In other words, most of the messages on HIV/AIDS are so framed as if the target group lived far flung from other humans, rather than in the neighbourhood of others that had a different HIV/AIDS status. Very little, if at all any, consideration is thus given to the inevitability of one group (e.g. PLWHA’s = People Living with HIV/AIDS) verifying the message meant to them with reference to the other group (i.e. non-PLWHA’s) or the other group making inferences from messages explicitly meant for one group. Consequently, such messages are anything but foolproof in terms of contradiction or discordance of content. This has left majority of the population largely unenlightened, undecided or skeptical about a lot that has to do with HIV/AIDS. For instance, while most infected persons are reluctant to disclose themselves because of the stigma attached to the virus (no thanks to many of these campaigns), others simply decide to ignore or overlook the warnings given. This may result not only to untold suffering and early death of infected persons, but also a rise in the number of new infections, something which the governmental and non-governmental agencies have been trying, with relative success, to curb.

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**Aim and Objectives of the Study**

With the above in mind, this study is aimed at using the method of Critical Discourse Analysis to analyse HIV/AIDS discourse as composed by campaigners in Nigeria and relayed to the populace – an analysis carried out from both the perspectives of PLWHA's and non-PLWHA's. This is specifically done in order to achieve the following objectives:

- a) To find out if and to what extent such messages contain information that may imply the reverse/opposite of what they explicitly state.
- b) To ascertain whether this has any impact on audience's (PLWHA and non-PLWHA) reception and interpretation of the messages.
- c) To determine how this impact may affect the attitude of the audience towards the messages and the epidemic itself.

**Methodology**

The data for this study were generated by means of textual inference (analysis) which mainly comprises printed matter – posters, leaflets, handbills, pamphlets, stickers, billboards, etc – on the subject of HIV/AIDS. These are classified, analysed and described. It is through this technique that the various objectives as stated above were pursued.

To address our first objective, we carry out a direct critical analysis of the text materials gathered from different government and non-governmental institutions, wherein we look at the manner in which these messages are encoded with what purpose and which category of audience in mind. This will enable us to find out if one group is likely to discern from messages meant for other groups, whether it (that group) is negatively portrayed and/or stigmatised (in the case of PLWHA's) or (in the case of non-PLWHA's) left ill-informed, inadequately enlightened or addressed in an unduly exaggerated manner. More crucially, we will, on this basis, be able to argue whether the messages are adequately relayed without any 'side effects'.

It is this that will see us to our second and third objectives, which we hope to address by inference from the answers to the first objective as well as through the techniques of interview and questionnaire. For the latter, we administer questionnaires accompanied by select adverts to respondents across the four variables of age, locality (urban or rural), educational background and HIV/AIDS status. From the feedbacks obtained from respondents, we hope to elicit such information as the depth of their knowledge of what the adverts on HIV/AIDS (print, electronic and open air) aim to pass across, their response or reaction to such messages or knowledge in terms of attitude and practice, etc. This will enable us determine whether and to what extent target audiences are enlightened, confused, frustrated or simply bored by these adverts. The interviews, largely targeting those who may not or can not fill and return questionnaires, also aim to achieve the same purpose as above, only that here, the interviews being non-structured, have the advantage of eliciting from respondents a variety of information.

### Content and Critical Analysis of HIV/AIDS Discourse

Since it was first reported in the early 1980's, HIV/AIDS has generated a lot of interest and research ranging, among others, from scientific (medical), socio-political to even artistic. One field that is not left out of this apparent 'scramble' is the field of linguistics, specifically the field of discourse analysis which sees the interest generated by HIV/AIDS as resulting in a form of discourse that has taken a particular pattern worthy of analysis. Hence the current interest in the analysis of discourse of HIV/AIDS. Predictably, such studies do not concentrate on the virus, its origin, cure or mode of transmission. Rather, they look at the pattern of discourse in the course of relaying information to the public about the virus. Many of such studies focus on identity and stigmatization as far as the framing of the messages are concerned. This may not be unconnected with the fact that people with AIDS, just like other groups – Negroes, gays, etc, have been defined, perhaps more unfavourably than any other group, in such a way that studies of these 'definitions' have become a common place. When such identities are constructed, they tend in most cases to be negative, either explicitly or implicitly, irrespective of the motive behind the framing of the text.

Such are the issues that attract the interest of scholars, like Alcorn (1988) and Sontag (1989), who, in separate studies on metaphors used in framing texts on HIV/AIDS, seem to concur that people with AIDS are often associated with horrific images such as war, poverty, deviance and criminality, from which standpoint the 'normal' society ('us' - i.e. people without AIDS) is expected to look upon them as, the 'them', the unfortunate ones, the polluters and intruders - a threat to a peaceful, disease-free world, upon whom a war must be waged.

Such images, notes Brandt (1988), often evoke a '*triple stigma*', namely the medical tag of a person that is terminally ill with no hope of ever reintegrating into normal society; a stained character or personality (as one is associated with (dishonoured?) groups like homosexuals, IV drug users, and prostitutes) and thirdly the stigma of being seen as a sort of warehouse of an infectious disease that is so deadly and incurable.

Another piece of work that deserves attention here is Roger Myrick's (1996) *AIDS, Communication, and Empowerment*. Based mainly on Foucault's model of discourse and sexuality, the author looks at the relationship between language and culture, specifically as it concerns the construction of gay men's identity in media messages relating to HIV/AIDS. On the basis of his qualitative analysis of data collected, Myrick exposes the manner in which HIV/AIDS discourse persistently tarnishes gay identity by defining them in terms of a diseased group and practically quarantining them from the general population. The conclusions of this analysis offers an important insight into the way communication about AIDS could have social consequences, especially as regards the control and management of the epidemic, leading to the success or failure of such campaigns – an issue which is well expounded in the book.

This exposition is timely because not only does it provide a view of these media campaigns from the perspective of the marginalized groups, but also showcases the way in which this communication represents a hangover of the

cultural and historical disposition of the gay community, in the public eye, as one that is tainted and discounted.

In a doctoral thesis on another topic of interest, Rodney Jones (2001) attempts an appraisal, in cause-effect terms, of the framing of HIV/AIDS discourse and its effects on the attitude and behaviour of people in their daily lives, which may heighten or lower, as the case may be, their risks of exposure to the virus. In this work, Jones addresses two crucial issues, the first concerning strategies of text framing of public discourse on HIV, where he talks of 'technologizing' different acts involving HIV transmission and prevention, to enable such producers identify certain groups or practices as risky. As a consequence of this, a second issue arises, where consumers of this 'technologized' discourse engage in different tactics to strengthen or weaken the restrictions propagated in such texts, thereby inventing or fantasizing their identity as well as relationship to the virus, in terms of risk proximity. On the basis of this he argues that in order to adequately understand people's action in response to the threat of HIV, it is necessary to take into cognizance the pressure generated between the environment where the transmission takes place and the actions of individuals within that environment, concluding that any approach which falls short of this can only result in partial or even distorted account of people's acts in response to HIV.

What is common to the studies reviewed above is the fact that they all have an interest in how language works in health communication, specifically with respect to HIV/AIDS. But they differ from one another, as they do with the present study, in methodology and framework, as well as emphasis. Hence, in demarcating a point of departure from these studies, the present study places emphasis not just on textual inference, wherein such hitherto sparsely explored issues as contradictions are considered, but also uses audience perception and reaction as additional means of assessing the efficiency of the messages. Furthermore, it is expected that by applying this to the Nigerian context, which differs considerably in terms of socio-cultural and linguistic disposition from the areas in which these writers have carried out their studies, the present study is poised to make a significant contribution to HIV/AIDS discourse.

### CDA and the Analysis of Discourse

Taking inspiration from the Hallidayan *systemic grammar*, CDA sees language as being characterized by the tripartite of *ideational*, *textual* and *interpersonal* components. (Halliday 2004, Wodak 2001). Stimulated by these three canons of communication and textual analysis, CDA looks at language as a 'type of social practice' (Kress 1990:85), by which people propagate their ideology and worldview, through various tactics, such as being deliberately vague, unduly emphasizing a point, exaggerating content and using inflammatory language among many others. It is the aim of CDA to look into these and explore and expose ways in which powerful people and institutions construct versions of reality to suit their aim (cf McGregor 2003).

Thus, in a very general sense, CDA is a multidisciplinary approach to the study of texts, seeing language as ‘one among many *social practices of representation and signification*’ (*sic*, Kress *loc. cit.*), endeavouring ‘to unpack the ideological underpinnings of discourse that have become so naturalized over time that we begin to treat them as common, acceptable and natural features of discourse’ (Teo 2000). CDA seeks to unmask the spoken or written word in order ‘to bring about a different perspective and deeper understanding of whose interest is being served’ in the text in question. (McGregor 2003:1). CDAist, therefore, analyse discourse to uncover hidden, implied or compromised meanings, knowing full well that words, oftentimes highly politicised, are potent – at times deadly – tools in representing the stand, the interest and worldview of its users. In this connection, McGregor (*loc. cit.*), citing van Dijk, 1988 and Foucault, 2000, concurs that:

CDA is concerned with studying and analysing written texts and spoken words to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced and transformed within specific social, economic, political and historical contexts.(...) It tries to illuminate ways in which the dominant forces in a society construct versions of reality that favours their interests.

In this regard, it is important to note that the relationships of participants (who are ‘socially situated’) in constructing discourse are not the same all the time, since in some cases there might exist ‘complete solidarity’ or ‘complete inequality’, through which meanings are negotiated or even imposed. It is these factors, among many others, that CDA investigates in order to unravel the mystique power of language beyond what the average, oppressed and indoctrinated individual is able to see. Thus, armed with this ‘overt political agenda’, CDA fuses ‘...solidarity with the oppressed’ with an attitude of opposition and dissent against those who abuse text and talk in order to establish, confirm or legitimate their abuse of power’ (van Dijk 2001:96) And CDA is ‘proud’ of, and openly admits, its being ‘biased’ in favour of the oppressed.

Whether or not HIV/AIDS sensitization campaigns are instances of oppression and legitimizing/consolidating abuse of power is not an important issue here. What is important is the fact that CDA makes it a point of duty to critically analyse discourse, not only to unravel furtive instances of information packaging, mismanagement or manipulation, but also detect the potential power of such messages, for good or for bad. Thus, when all is said and done, CDA is one framework of analysis that gives a very valid insight into the inner workings of the human mind as it encodes messages with a particular purpose, for a particular group of audience.

### **Stigma in the Allocation and Management of Identity**

Goffman (1963) defines stigma as an attribute that places on the bearer a mark of dishonour and shame, thereby reducing him from a full and normal person to a



‘tainted, discounted one’. In his seminal book entitled *Stigma: the management of Spoiled Identity*, Goffman distinguishes two types of stigmatized people - the *discredited* and the *discreditable*. Whilst the former noticeably differ from normal humans (e.g lepers, albinos etc), the latter vary from other humans secretly, so that if this variation or deviance becomes known to other people, they will be rejected and stigmatized.

Goffman maintains that within every society, there are bound to be individuals who for one reason or another are ‘marked’ as abnormal, i.e. not living up to the laid down standards of normalcy. Such people are put in a position where they inevitably define themselves in relation to others within the wider, normal society. But in this attempt at self-definition, the stigmatized is faced by two contradictory stands, ‘in that society tells him he is a member of the wider group, but he is also different in some degree (not up to standard?) and that it would be foolish to deny this difference’ (Goffman 1963:123).

For Goffman, every individual necessarily grapples with two distinct identities in life: the identity they display in public life, which he calls *virtual identity* and the self, or identity known only to the beholders and hidden from the public, termed *actual identity*. How well these identities are managed invariably depends on the level of an individual’s stigmatization or lack thereof. In the case of the stigmatized, however, a special incongruity exists between the ‘*virtual social identity*’ and the ‘*actual social identity*’, in that the two identities become difficult to reconcile: on the one hand is the public tint of a rather substandard member of the society, while on the other hand is a longing or desire for a normalcy ticket that will enable him fit into the larger society as a bona fide member.

Drawing insights from this rationalization, Jones (1997) avers that where an individual’s mark of stigma is not immediately noticeable to the larger society (as is the case with HIV positive people – ‘*AIDS no dey show for face*’), ‘identity management in everyday life is often facilitated through the mechanism of *passing* in which the “discreditable” self is hidden within an envelope of *virtual identity*’. That is to say, by exploiting the mechanism of *passing*, such individuals, thanks to their outward appearance, are to some degree able to manage stigmatization by swaying the public’s eye from what they actually are to view them as what they will like to be - i.e. normal. But then, in the case of HIV/AIDS, since stigmatization is facilitated via messages directed at people presumed to be HIV/AIDS negative, Jones maintains that the PLWH/A is faced with an internal conflict of self-assessment and identification in relation to the messages and the people for whom such messages are meant. Nevertheless, the great punch does not lie here, but in the fact that as long as they can hide their actual identity behind their virtual identity, PLWH/A’s may never expose themselves to the other, hostile world of stigmatization and discrimination.

There are, however, instances where the individual’s stigma tag is too obvious to be kept off the public eye. In such cases, the anomalous person necessarily leans on others for assistance in managing these conflicting identities. This role, says Goffman, is played by people he refers to as ‘*the wise*’, who not



only possess intimate knowledge of the condition of the stigmatized, but also ‘hold the power to facilitate (or disrupt) the mechanism of *passing*, to act as “mediators” between the stigmatized’s *virtual* and *actual* identities’ (Jones 1997). In the context of HIV/AIDS, these ‘wise’ ones are referred to as counselors in the literature and they have the privilege not only of meeting face-to-face with PLWH/A’s, but also assuming a position wherein they address them in terms of reconciling the two selves - in this case a diseased/deviant self and a hopeful/normal self.

It is in an attempt at this reconciliation that such counselors, whose messages we are analyzing, fall into the traps of making their positions inconsistent, especially as it is their job to, at the same time, address those presumed negative, whom they urge not only to stay away from a deadly, incurable disease by staying off *risky* and *immoral* behaviour, but also fight it in an all out war.

### **Data Analysis and Discussion**

The literature reviewed above testifies to the different perspectives from which communicating health, particularly with respect to HIV/AIDS, is viewed. So varied as these studies are, we nevertheless see the need to further diversify the focus with a view to exploring avenues for improving the efficiency of communicating in this subject, which is unarguably a matter of life and death. In this connection therefore, this study analyses this discourse from the point of view of the nature of composing messages, with particular interest on loopholes that might exist as par the content and structure of the messages in relation to the audience and purpose in mind. For our present purpose, we shall take three such loopholes seen to characterize the campaigns, as discussed below.

### **Amplification and scarecrow tactics**

When asked which is the deadliest and most feared disease known to man today, most individuals are very likely to respond: ‘HIV/AIDS’, although more medically minded persons will let such people think otherwise. For HIV/AIDS may not be deadlier than such diseases as cancer, hypertension, and sickle cell anemia among others, nor is it the only transmissible disease around. The ‘popularity’ (or more appropriately, notoriety) of HIV/AIDS is, however, directly linked to its most talked about mode of transmission. Sex is, for good or for bad, a popular subject - a topic not too many people genuinely hate to discuss and yet even less wish to be seen as enthusiastic about it. In most societies in Africa, sex is seen as a purely private act whose topic is largely conceived of as a taboo – more so when it is indulged in out of wedlock, in which case it becomes an irresponsible act worthy of condemnation. It is thus best kept in the minds of the actors, lest an individual comes to be looked upon disdainfully once identified as a sex offender. When, therefore, a disease so deadly as HIV/AIDS comes to be associated with sex, an avenue is then created for a rather ‘legitimate’ discourse of sex.

The point we are trying to make should be clear by now. Much as we are not saying that campaigners on HIV/AIDS use the virus solely as an avenue for

discussing sex and sex related activities, we are, nevertheless, arguing that such activists seem to have been carried away by the topic to the extent of giving undue emphasis on sex as the cause of HIV/AIDS, to the detriment of other equally potent modes of transmission. This is notwithstanding the fact that, although it is hugely claimed that sex accounts for 90% of infections, there is not as yet any scientifically verifiable means of determining the means through which an individual contracts the virus. And yet, sex is very much amplified, such that hardly any counsellor or campaigner discusses the aetiology or prevention of the virus without not only mentioning sex (which is alright) but also making it the first and most prominent issue. The widely publicized ‘ABC of HIV/AIDS’, for instance, solely concentrates on sex related issues vis-à-vis

**A** (= Abstinence from sex)

**B** (= Being faithful to one’s partner) and

**C** (= Condom use),

as if this was the end of the story! This among others has contributed to engraving in the mind of the populace that sex is about the only way to contract HIV/AIDS and, worse still, that abstinence from it or engaging in it the ‘right way’ a sure way of protecting oneself from infection.

This position is confirmed by ten leaflets/handbills randomly picked for perusal, all of which mention sex first, which also overshadows other causes and means of prevention. In many of these, sex is unduly emphasized sometimes in an apparently exaggerated way. For instance, one such advert declares

In Africa, 9 out of 10 people get the AIDS virus by having sex with someone else who has the virus’

This, much as it may seem close to being accurate, leaves some room for dispute: what, for instance, accounts for the cases of sexually inactive as well as unenlightened individuals who may have contracted the virus through mother to child transmission, blood transfusion or by using unsterilised clippers, blades, needles and other sharp objects?

Another handbill lists four means of protection, out of which three are sex-related – faithfulness, abstinence and condom use, while the fourth mentions the use of ‘disposable needles or sterilized needles or blades’. This is then recapped by a final note, which states:

‘the best protection is to *avoid sex*’

Yet another leaflet proposes ten self-assessment questions for rating of HIV/AIDS risk. Of these, the first seven questions are related to sex, while the remaining three cover other non-sexual causes. Although these represent just a fraction of written materials on HIV/AIDS campaigns, they form a microcosm of not just written materials, but any form of discourse on the pandemic.

This view is further backed up by the result of a preliminary questionnaire, in which out of some 30 respondents, mainly senior undergraduate students of the University of Maiduguri, 28 (representing 93.3%) identify sex as the most potent means of transmission, as against 2 (representing 6.6%) for using unsterilised sharp objects and none for blood transfusion and mother to child infection. Quite a number omitted to mention, in different cases, the other modes, but none omitted sex. This is a direct effect of the huge emphasis placed on sex by campaigners, to such an extent that HIV/AIDS has become synonymous with sex. The impact of this is far-reaching and negative as far as prevention, and especially containment, is concerned. For very few PLWHAs will, under these circumstances, disclose themselves to a rather hostile and stigmatizing society. And while some suffer and die in silence, others live on to spread the virus either inadvertently or deliberately on vengeance mission, neither of which scenarios the society can afford to manage or watch helplessly.

### **Discordance and contradictions**

We have stated above, that a large number of text composers frame their messages as if their target group is an island, so that little or no consideration is given to a second group that may read such messages and interpret or verify them in relation to their own status and messages meant for them. The snag lies in the fact that such messages may be a compromise of one viewpoint for another or even outright contradictory. This tendency has become so widespread in HIV/AIDS sensitization campaigns largely because two opposing groups exist – the presumably negative and the positive. This has given room to different manners of contradictions as discussed below.

#### *i Contradiction One: irresponsible sex versus anti-stigmatisation campaigns*

In HIV/AIDS discourse, sex is not only amplified (as discussed above) but it is also largely implied or even explicitly stated that Aids is a result of an irresponsible sex, meaning that only the immoral contract it, while the godly, moral individuals are free from it. Consider for instance the adverts which state:

‘a mutually faithful relationship is safe’,

which implies that unfaithful relationship is the opposite. And even for the promiscuous, a word of advice is given for the benefit of the smarter ones:

‘... when in doubt, use a condom’.

Consequently, anybody with Aids is to be considered, in the light of these adverts, as either unfaithful to his/her, unwise about his/her well being or both. From Goffmann’s point of view, individuals that are unfortunate enough to be so classified do not deserve the ticket for normalcy in the eye of the general population. Our argument here is that by portraying and amplifying sex, irresponsible and reckless sex as a major source of HIV/AIDS, text framers

facilitate the stigmatization of the carriers, especially when they at the same time openly declare that HIV is an enemy to wage war on.

Declarations like this directly clash with messages in which the society is censured against stigmatizing HIV/AIDS positives. Hence, just as we are tacitly made to shun them, we are at the same time urged to embrace them:

‘... HIV/AIDS patients need your support and care to survive. Do not drive them away....’

The important, and yet potentially damaging scenario to note here is the fact that both groups (positive/negative) are susceptible to confusion or skepticism, as each assesses the two conflicting messages and interpret them from his/her standpoint of being positive or negative. Whether the final outcome of these interpretations reflect the campaigners’ intended messages is an issue open to our investigation.

*ii Contradiction two: from war mongers to pacifists*

The practice of associating AIDS with war has been widely studied and analysed (cf. Alcorn, Sontag, *supra*). On the one hand we are told that the virus which, by the way, is contracted from PLWH/A’s is to be fought in an all out war. This implies severing contact with or quarantining the carriers.

HIV/AIDS: **Battle** for all; why Nigeria is important in the **anti-AIDS war**; Vmobile supports **fight against** AIDS, etc

On the other hand, however, we are told not to stigmatize them, at the same time as they are told that they are part and parcel of the society that is implicitly urged to fight them.

‘... People living with HIV/AIDS are our people, love them’

Such messages, to put it mildly, do not help matters. For one, the general population is left confused as to whether it is really safe to be close to the carriers – how strategically safe is it to come close, in a heated battle, to an enemy that has lain low, asking for help? Secondly, the existence of these contradictory messages has the tendency to make PLWH/A’s suspect some double standards on the part of campaigners, especially when they assess such messages and see themselves portrayed in different lights for different purposes/audiences.

*iii Contradiction three: an incurable, yet perfectly manageable disease*

Campaigners often tell us that HIV/AIDS are incurable; yet we are also informed that we can still carry out our normal activities for as long as ten years or more. In a country where an ailment as common and easily manageable as malaria kills people for want of medical care; where road accidents and highway robbery are an easy means of losing one’s life; where poverty alone can be a remote cause of death, ten years is probably a good deal and a chance worth taking as a price for

enjoying oneself recklessly! At least so would some non-PLWH/A's reason as they overhear messages meant for PLWH/A's, (with a view to calming them down and facing their normal lives?) – messages that give details, accompanied with pictures of (presumably) healthy and happy looking HIV carriers, on how to run one's life when one is infected with the virus.

'Living positively: how to keep you and your loved ones healthy when you are HIV positive'

But then, the PLWH/A's, on the other hand, feel somewhat bamboozled and disorientated as they come across messages staunchly propagating the incurable nature of the very disease they are told is manageable.

*HIV/AIDS: the killer disease is here; Avoid risky behaviour: HIV/AIDS is real: don't ruin your life.*

This leaves a lot of room for contradiction and confusion on both sides, a situation that is not helpful to the prevention and recovery process, which is the aim of such adverts.

*iv Contradiction four: celebrities and unfortunate carriers*

Disclosure of ones HIV status, especially if such a person is confirmed positive, is seen as a very potent way of controlling and containing the effect of the virus, especially since this enables NGO's and other health workers to counsel the patient in question with regards to minimizing the devastation of the virus in him as well as enlighten him/her on the importance of keeping others away from the virus by refraining from engaging with them in behaviors liable to contraction.

But the very means through which such people are encouraged to disclose themselves is used to scare them away from doing so. For who dares disclose him/herself and face such stigmatization, when a story, whether fictional or factual, is told of

1. PLWH/A's sent away by a landlord from home because they are suspected of carrying Aids:  
'Landlord evicts HIV-positive widows'
2. A conscript who lost a career in the army because of his HIV status  
'How HIV stopped my enrolment into army'
3. A teenager shunned and stigmatized by members of her family because she was once raped by an HIV positive

Apart from portraying them in negative lights, PLWH/A's are also portrayed as celebrities, which is just as nearly risky: in one such leaflet, we are told the story of a Ms Aderonke, who becomes a heroine by making

*'... a brave stand against the stigma she faced'*



We are further informed, in a page emblazoned with her good looking picture, that she now runs an NGO and sundry – a sign of positive and good living.

‘Afolabi has become a champion to PLHA and the general community, who now consult her on issues related to health, especially HIV’

Now, again, in a society where people could do just about anything to get recognition/popularity and good living; where people do not seem to care how or for what purpose they attain celebrity status, are such stories not offering a premeditated consolation (just in case they contract the virus) for any body who does not care what risky behaviour he/she engages in?

### Definition and classification

One tendency prevalent in HIV/AIDS discourse is to classify the populace in such a way that one group is portrayed as being more susceptible or more resistant to infection than another group. This has an adverse effect especially.

#### *i The gender label: ladies at greater risk*

In many of the discourses on AIDS, women are portrayed as being at greater risk in terms of infection, even though no scientific evidence exists to corroborate this. This can be seen in the tendency of many adverts to favour female subjects in making certain points whether by means of picture or a story. Thus, when stories are told of rape victims who contracted the virus in the process, the central characters are usually school girls or girl hawkers. Similarly, when we are told of stories of PLWH/A's that have been stigmatized, it is usually the same women.

This treatment of women may not be unconnected with a number of realities on ground: for one, whenever the topic of prostitution is discussed, women are naturally seen as the major characters, largely because they are the ones carrying the tag – euphemistically styled ‘(commercial) sex workers’, a vocation that no man is known to profess. The fact that a prostitute may sleep with scores of men, who would then inevitably contract and transmit the virus, is hardly ever taken into account. If this were to be done, it would might appear that there are more men than women that lead promiscuous life and therefore perhaps more male PLWH/A's.

Rape victims are also known to be women, with the rapists hardly accounted for. Thus, being vulnerable to rape, women are largely seen as being exposed to infection as well. It is these, among others, that make the society to view women as a sort of repository of the deadly virus, consequent upon which they are largely demonized and stigmatized. A message pasted on notice boards on University of Maiduguri campus, entitled

*‘who wants to buy AIDS with his own money’,*

epitomises such erroneous but unfortunately widely held views. In it, the writer makes a direct, rather to scathing an attack on ladies, whom he sees to be warehouse of the virus, warning that they have the wherewithal to ‘... send you to your grave before your time...’ Messages and views like these, apart from



facilitating the stigmatization of certain groups, also have the potential for making some individuals relax, thinking that they do not stand enough risk to contract HIV.

*ii A class ridden disease or survival of the fittest*

Contrary to scientific reasoning, HIV/AIDS advertisements tend to rather inadvertently create the impression that celebrities and people that her highly placed are less susceptible to infection and scourge of the virus and that even when such people are infected, they may not suffer as much because they can afford good food and the very expensive antiretroviral drugs meant to allay its advances. Mr. Jacob Zuma, a former South African Vice President, may have thought along this line when he knowingly had sex with a confirmed HIV positive lady without any protection. For people like this, the rationalization would have been that if one knows the virus can ‘mark time’ (for as long as ten or more years) with enough diet and anti-retrovirals, then why bother to abstain from acts liable to infection – after all infection itself may be a matter of chance. Such thoughts are injected into many minds by the nature of the adverts themselves, which are so designed to imply that even when infected, good food may be a secret to prolonging life for many years to come. In one such advert, a very colourful, mouth-watering picture of different diets is presented, followed by the caption

‘... if you keep yourself healthy, you may not have to take any anti-retrovirals for many years’.

To substantiate our analysis, we presented these adverts, in a preliminary informal contact, to presumably uninfected persons in order to weigh their reactions and, predictably, many expressed a relief, implying that they were glad that they got to know this.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

In summarizing and concluding this paper, it is important to reiterate that just as ignorance is a crucial factor in the spread of HIV/AIDS, enlightenment campaigns, especially when inadequately framed, could have the reverse, negative effect of what they mean to achieve. But then, when all is said and done, it is unfair to place the blame for the existence of contradictions and drawbacks in HIV/AIDS discourse, whatever the nature of such discourses, on the shoulders of these campaigners who, on the contrary, constitute an important force for containing the spread and devastation of the virus. Rather, what is at stake is a deadly virus that has been popularized (and perhaps mystified) by a polarized society (the negative and the positive carriers) with the tendency to view just about everything concerning the virus from different, even opposing, standpoints. And campaigners have the daunting task of being a Mark Anthony, by speaking in favour of two opposing sides without compromising message content and quality. We acknowledge that this is no easy task.

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## 12. Towards the Development of Igbo Expressions for Communicating and Disseminating Information about HIV/AIDS

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### 1. Introduction

HIV, Human Immunodeficiency Virus is the virus that causes AIDS. It “makes the body weak and less able to fight sickness, and people with HIV in their body go on to become sick with many diseases.” (Nwachukwu, 2005:11). AIDS, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, according to Spector (1999), is one infection that leads to immunodeficiency, leaving the human body at the mercy of opportunistic diseases. We understood opportunistic disease to be the diseases that take advantage of the weakened human immune system to attack humans.

The first officially reported cases of HIV occurred in 1981 in the U.S., where five people were reported to have come down with the virus. *By mid 1982, over 350 people had been diagnosed as having AIDS and more than 90% others were confirmed homosexuals* (Hunt, 2005, Nwachukwu, 2005).

As the virus took its pandemic course throughout the world, earlier assumptions that HIV/AIDS was a gay related disease, and that it was a punishment from God, were dropped. Different people from all walks of life were being infected until this present day. Up till today, the spread of HIV infection and AIDS has continued at a relentless and frightening pace – at almost an uncontrollable rate.

HIV/AIDS is believed to be transmitted mainly through sexual intercourse and through other possible means of blood contact such as sharing hypodermic needles and other piercing objects and from mother to child in the uterus and at birth. Hunt (2005) believes that if the virus is acquired by sexual activity the virus enters the body in infected macrophages in semen or vaginal secretions. Dendritic cells in the mucosal linings bind the virus shed by macrophages and carry it to the lymph nodes where CD<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>T<sub>4</sub> cells become infected, and so the virus migrates to other cells (Hunt, 2005:36).

Between the period of infection and a period of about 21 days is called a window period – this is a period during which, according to the above writer, an infected person does not give a *positive western blot HIV test or ELISA*, although there is a high viral load and possible symptoms. This can last for six months, before sero conversion.

However, the human immune system does not stand at ease, watching the virus eat up the body. The B Cell and T lymphocytes at this early stage mount a strong defence causing the virus to disappear for some time from circulation.

A period known as *latent reservoir period* sets in as the disappeared virus begins to produce multiply up to 10 billion new HIV particles each day (Hunt, 2005). At the latent reservoir period, the viral particles in the blood stream

declines, and the number of blood CD<sub>4</sub> cells is also slightly reduced. An untreated person at this period may begin to have loss of CD<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup> cells and abortion of the immune response, as the cells that proliferate to respond to the virus are infected and killed.

At the stage described above, the virus can no longer be controlled, even as helper CD<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup> (T<sub>4</sub>) cells are destroyed, the killer cells needed to control HIV is also damaged, which eventually damages the T cells that they need to function efficiently. This eventually leads to increase in the mutation of the virus. This is said to take place between 1 and 15 years in adults, but in less than 3 years in children. This is the time of onset of AIDS. Once AIDS develops, it is believed that 'patients' rarely survive more than two years without chemotherapeutic intervention. Though the period with which patients can come down with AIDS varies with patients.

## 2. The Fight so far against HIV/AIDS

The emergence of HIV/AIDS to the world seemed to have taken the people of the world by surprise. The world, no doubt was not prepared to receive such a fierce unprecedented epidemic, hence, before they knew it, HIV/AIDS had started taking some unaccountable lives.

Since the said period, HIV/AIDS is reported to have been spreading from one country to the other, from one continent to the other, claiming lives as the U.S former Secretary of State observes in *Awake* (2002): "... no war on the face of the world is as destructive as the AIDS pandemic". Peter Piot, Executive Director of Joint United Nations Programmes on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), likewise states that "... none of us involved in those early days of AIDS could have imagined the scale of the epidemic that has unfolded".

The world, nevertheless, has not folded its arms to watch HIV/AIDS claim human lives unchecked. Governments of different countries, corporate bodies, faith-based and non-governmental organisations, all that are concerned, have so far put heads together to find a lasting solution to the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

HIV/AIDS, "... the disease that can kill all of us" (Obasanjo, 2005) has equally received serious attention from most world's known researchers and research institutions, medical and health practitioners, and the impact in the world is such that people can no longer keep silent as WCC (1997) states that:

When AIDS emerged two decades ago, few people could predict how the epidemic would evolve. We know now from experience that AIDS can devastate whole regions, wipe out decades of national development, widen the gulf between rich and poor nations and push ahead stigmatized groups closer to the margins of society (WCC, 1997:15).

After several efforts by medical profession to invent medical cure for HIV/AIDS, which have failed, the world has come to accept the fact that for now HIV/AIDS is incurable, but preventive and treatable. Thus, the world's effort towards the



prevention of further spread is on the increase as various strategies are employed by government and non-governmental bodies in the fight against the pandemic.

Some of the strategies employed to fight HIV/AIDS so far worldwide include (i) HIV/AIDS Impact Mitigation and Control Programme – This is a programme designed to train and retrain trainers, who go into the rural and urban areas in a bid to equip the people towards the prevention of HIV/AIDS and the stopping of stigmatization (ii) HIV/AIDS Awareness campaign – This is a programme primarily designed to educate the people on the realities and existence of HIV/AIDS. This is because, some people still doubt the existence of HIV, even when they are not aware of their own HIV status.

The next phase of the fight is the fight against HIV/AIDS – associated stigma, especially against the most vulnerable groups and individuals. These include people living with HIV/AIDS, women and children born to HIV-infected mothers, prisoners and injecting drug users.

### 3. Language, a Major Instrument for fighting against HIV/AIDS

Stross (1981) defines language as man's most important means of transferring ideas from one mind to another, while Wardhaugh (1988) sees language as what the members of a particular society speak. From the above definitions, we deduce that (i) language is spoken and (ii) language communicates ideas among people of the same *speech community*. Invariably, one of the primary functions of language is to communicate and transmit information among related people.

Language cannot be discussed away from many disciplines and many courses of study at all levels of education, experience and knowledge. Language, according to Stephen Entwisle (2005) is thus a *symbolic form of representation used consciously or otherwise to convey multiple layers of meaning. Literal meanings are accompanied by and inextricably linked to social, historical, political and experimental factors pertaining to the speaker, the listener and the environments of two* (Entwisle, 2005:1). This is further made clearer in the words of L. Goueffic (1996) as the writer explains:

Words are the shaper of ideas. They name concepts and ideas; without being able to express ourselves in words. Reasoning involves thoughts put into premises and conclusions and these are expressed through words. (Goueffic 1996:3)

Words are actually used to express thoughts in language. Words are language themselves, and the power of language is invariably expressed in the words of language. The strength of language is in the manipulation of words to function in diverse ways suitable for the situation at hand.

In a related sense, speech community implies a people with common interest, irrespective of geographical location. A speech community is therefore constituted globally within the construct of a whole world of language and linguistic codes used to express HIV/AIDS related issues. Hence "the language use to conceptualize and talk about HIV/AIDS reflects our personal biases and



understanding or lack of understanding. It also helps to shape our own and others attitude about HIV/AIDS” (UNAIDS, 2005). On the other hand, inappropriate language could fuel panic, discrimination and hopelessness, thereby promoting the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. For instance, at different times, HIV/AIDS has been referred to as “a disease”, illness, an epidemic and a plague. These terms, according to Entwistle (2005) are all correct linguistically, with the first two being appropriate in most contexts due to their broad definitions.

Disease means any departure from health that is, illness in general, on the other hand, illness is the condition of being ill or in poor health. The term ‘epidemic’ therefore is more appropriately used with reference to the HIV/AIDS situations. Plague is however the most volatile of them all. Plague is however the most volatile of them all. Entwistle (2005) defines plague as ‘any contagious disease that is deadly’. Hence, the use of ‘plague’ or rather ‘gay plague’ (as most often said), is termed inappropriate in relation to HIV/AIDS as it breeds stigmatization.

#### **4. The Role of Indigenous Languages in Fighting HIV/AIDS**

A person is and embodiment of his or her language and culture, hence a person’s language is one of his or her primary identity. Hegel (1969) and Kelkel (1978) define language as a nation-forming force and also the force which plays a decisive role in shaping the attitude of men. This means that a person’s language is part of his or her being. This applies more in a person’s indigenous language.

A person’s indigenous language differentiates between the person and others from other speech communities. A person’s indigenous language sometimes referred to as mother tongue is that language a person grows up to acquire as child. It is that language spoken in the speech community where a person grows up as a child, which he or she also acquires as a child. Sapir in Mandelbaum (1971) and Whorf (1967) refers to a person’s indigenous language (L1) when he explains:

Language has the power to analyse experience into theoretically dissociable elements and to create the world of the potential integration with the actual which enables human beings to transcend the immediately given in their individual experiences and join in a larger common understanding.

This means that a person’s L<sub>1</sub> constitutes the person’s the person’s thought pattern which could be translated to any other language which the person later comes in contact with (Anaso (2001) agrees to this idea as the point out that the language of any people forms part of their culture and psychology.

The L<sub>1</sub> of any people serves as a source language to them and as a point of contact with other languages and cultures, and according to Nwaozuzu (2001), is sufficiently rich to cope with the socio-economic needs of the people who speak it.

Although the term HIV/AIDS is a foreign term, the virus and the ill health condition it causes is not foreign since people infected and killed by the virus in both rural and urban communities, local and international communities. It is the duty of the indigenous language users to translate the term HIV/AIDS and its related terms to their language which are better used to teach and communicate with the users – the members of the same speech community.

## 5. A Set of Igbo Working Terminology for Communicating and Disseminating Information about HIV/AIDS.

Below, we present a set terminologies in Igbo for communicating and disseminating information about HIV/AIDS:

- |     |      |                                                 |           |
|-----|------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| (1) | (i)  | Ọrịa nsi n'ọbara aga                            | Nsinọbara |
|     | (ii) | Ọrịa oji ọbara aga<br>(spreading through blood) | Oji ọbara |

We argue that HIV is not just a disease or a sickness, rather a virus, which is transmitted through blood. Hence we adopt the name *Nsinọbara* or *Ojiọbara*.

- (2) State Action Committee on AIDS (SACA)  
*Otu Ọchịchị Steeti hiwere maka Ịluso Nsinọbara Ọgụ (OSINỌ)*
- (3) National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA)  
*Otu Ọchịchị Etiti hiwere maka Ịluso Nsinọbara ọgụ (OEINỌ)*
- (4) HIV/AIDS Impact Mitigation and Control  
*Nluso ọgụ maka Njikwata Nsinọbara*
- (5) HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Programme  
*Ọmụmụ ihe (Emume) Gbasara Mgbochi na Njikwata Nsinọbara.*
- (6) HIV/AIDS Capacity Building  
*Ọzụzụ na Mwulite Megide Nsinọbara*
- (7) To test HIV/AIDS positive  
*Ọnọdụ nke inwe Nsinọbara*
- (8) To test HIV/AIDS negative  
*Ọnọdụ nke enweghi Nsinọbara*
- (9) To know one's HIV/AIDS status  
*Mmadụ ịma ọnọdụ ya gbasara Nsinọbara*
- (10) Opportunistic disease – (ọria) ọ pụtara n'ita ike  
These are disease that take advantage of the weakened human immune

system and attack the body, sometimes to death, they appear at the peak of the HIV attack on the immune system, hence the term *o pụtara n'ita ike* (appearing when it is most difficult).

- (11) Stigmatization (HIV/AIDS) (i) *Site na gi mara I zere*  
(ii) *Ikpa oke nke nsinobara*
- (12) Support Group – Otu Nkwado  
This is a body of PLWHA, who go around to encourage those infected to live positively, and to encourage the non-infected to avoid being infected.
- (13) People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA)  
*Ndi Nwere Nsinobara*
- (14) Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (NEPLWA)  
*Otu Ndi Nwere Nsinobara*
- (15) To die of AIDS  
*Inwụ Onwụ Nsinobara*
- (16) Mother to Child Transmission (of HIV/AIDS)  
*Nsi na Nne Fere na Nwa*
- (17) HIV/AIDS Mass Awareness Campaign  
*Mgbasa ozioma Nsinobara*
- (18) Zip Up! AIDS is real.  
*Mechie Ụkwụ! Nsinobara na-efeghari*
- (19) Stop indiscriminate sex, stop HIV  
*Kwusị ikwa iko aghara aghara, kwusị Nsinobara*
- (20) If you not fit hold body, use condom  
*O bụrụ na I gaghi ejidenwu onwe gi, jiri okpunna.*

### Conclusion

There is no limit to what we can do with our language and how much our language can serve us in the expression of our thoughts and views. It is wrong to regard one language above the other in terms of function and use; rather it is ideal and reasonable enough to look at our indigenous languages as capable as any other languages of the world to communicate both our developed and acquired ideologies.

However, the limited data we have develop or acquired in this paper is just a few examples of how much more terms we can develop to express HIV/AIDS issues. Nevertheless, we do not aim at discarding some already existing terms

such as *obirinajaqcha* for HIV/AIDS, rather, we aim at redefining HIV/AIDS from other different perspectives that allow an unlimited generation of other HIV/AIDS terms.

We therefore believe that further efforts by more Igbo scholars would field better results towards the total prevention and control of HIV/AIDS even in our local communities.

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# 13. Harnessing Language & Education as Tools for Economic Empowerment

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This paper examines the role of language and education in reducing poverty. It is argued that in order to respond to societal needs for economic empowerment, and to bridge the gap between the less-privileged and the privileged, education programmes should be guided by language policies that are sensitive to the role of indigenous languages in fostering learning and enhancing skills acquisition. Enhanced skill acquisition in turn will ensure better income, and then reduce poverty and enhance economic empowerment. It is recommended, among other things, that language education policy should take account of the multilingual nature of society, and allow learners to use their indigenous languages to enhance acquisition of skills that will guarantee gainful self-employment, thereby contributing to economic empowerment. This should put all African nations on course to attaining the United Nations goal of emancipation from the abject and dehumanizing condition of extreme poverty.

## **Introduction**

Economic empowerment in both material and human forms has been the focus of attention among many nations of the world. The overall policy on social development emphasizes adequate social investment through education. This explains why education features prominently in the action plans on poverty reduction for all countries of the world.

Economic empowerment, which is a function of poverty reduction, has been the subtext in every UN conference and summit during the 1990s. The poverty theme is emphatically stated in the United Nations millennium Declaration (UN 2000).

We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women, and children from the abject and dehumanizing condition of extreme poverty to which more than a billion of them are currently subject.

Along with the goal of poverty reduction by 2015, the family of nations also promised to achieve the related developmental goals of establishing universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowerment, reducing child mortality, improving material health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development.



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Since this declaration, poverty reduction has been deeply implicated in structures of politics, economy, culture and technology from the global down to local levels.

Irrespective of particular political ideology of a nation and of the specific strategy for mobilization, education can and must play a significant role in reducing poverty including preventing its inception. The present article examines the role of language and education in economic empowerment within the African context using Nigeria as a reference point.

The central plank of the Nigerian government's strategy to foster economic development is the stress on education in general and basic education in particular. For perhaps the first time, the education sector has been given pre-eminence and moved to the center of political debate. The outcome of governmental interventions in quantitative terms is the goal of having all young people in school by 2010. The nature of these policies has been analyzed elsewhere (Okebukola 2006). However for our purposes, it is important to note how the discourse around the value of education affects language education and poverty reduction.

A discussion of language and poverty reduction can be of relevance from many perspectives. From an economic consideration, a discussion of languages and poverty reduction could inform an entrepreneurial programme with emphasis on the need for knowledge for the purpose of self sufficiency and as a catalyst for enhancing participation in national development. This is very much in line with the objectives of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme. From a pedagogical point of view, however, language use in the formal school system in Nigeria raises a fundamental question: why it is that contrary to the stipulations of the NPE, Nigerian languages are not used for initial literacy? The NPE (2004) has spelt out the statuses and functions of all languages in use in the Nigerian polity.

During the first three years of primary education, Nigerian languages should be used as medium of instruction while English remains a subject in the curriculum. However, the languages change roles at the upper primary. English becomes the medium of instruction and the indigenous languages remain as subject to be taught like any other in the curriculum. This persists through out the remaining years of formal schooling.

Studies have shown that this policy statement suffers from effective implementation (Okebukola 2005) as most primary schools in Nigeria employ the medium of English from the nursery classes. In spite of research evidence in support of mother tongue in early literacy, many schools turn deaf ears to the policy. The reasons for the flagrant violation of the policy have been adduced: the policy is out of tune with social and education realities in urban areas where classrooms are typically linguistically heterogeneous, the problem of meta-language especially in science and methods, teacher mobility, the fear of the minority group that the policy is a political design intended to propagate the major languages at the expense of the minor ones and the colonial mentality of the superiority of English language.

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As noted in an earlier work (Okebukola 2005) the fundamental thing is that we have not developed our psyche to associate learning and education with anything apart from English or European-oriented education. According to Emenanjo (2000), what is required includes “a positive and pragmatic conviction, political will, strong governmental and institutional backing and iron-clad commitment of native speakers”.

It is worthy of note that numerous countries have formulated policies to encourage people to become literate for a variety of reasons. In many cases, there has been success in the recruitment of learners but often these quickly leave classes for lack of satisfaction and/or fulfillment. Motivation, recruitment and retention of literacy learners have then constituted a major problem for literacy promotion. The Universal Primary Education (UPE) of 1975 and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) of 1999 have sought to address the issue of how to get learners to school or endow them with learning skills. However at the heart of this is the need to marry home experiences with the child’s life at school. Introducing literacy in the child’s home language can help to foster motivation, satisfaction and fulfillment.

### **Poverty Induction**

The induction of poverty in developing nations can be traced to colonialism. The colonial masters under the guise of trade enslaved and exploited the people, accumulating wealth and high value possessions of the subjugated people to the extent that abject poverty became a prevalent condition of peoples within the first few decades of the arrival of the colonial masters. During the subsequent centuries, wealth continued to be squeezed and siphoned off from the colonies to the capital cities in the west (Ekist Encyclopedia 2004).

Colonizers also constructed a concomitant “culture” of poverty by discounting indigenous cultures and languages and making the natives discontinuous with their traditional knowledge. The inherent inability to speak the colonial language rendered subjugated peoples silent, workless, worthless and powerless. Every encounter with others in the new social structures was designed to induce a sense of inferiority in the subjugated. Colonial subjects were also deprived of technology and technological knowledge for fear that they could gain economical independence and that the rulers would thereby lose security (Koroma 2000).

Thus, in Nigeria poverty induction is conditioned by pre-colonial units: imperialist oppression and exploitation, the incorporation into the world capitalist system and Nigeria’s assemblage as one political entity. As noted by Koroma 2000.

Nigeria inherited a disarticulated socio-economic system from her colonial master, Britain”. This has greatly manifested in the material and political inequalities in the country. This could not have been otherwise since uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism (44)

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**Education and Poverty Reduction**

Education has been given different definitions by various authors. Some describe education as the process of expanding awareness and extending one's existence to an even greater sense of being. Others propose that education is the process of defining and redefining oneself in terms of successive researches of one's transactions with others and the environment. It has also been described as the process of actualizing human potentials. (Okebukola and Ogunbiyi 1999).

The dictionary of Education in Good (1973) defines education as the social process by which people are subjected to the influence of a selected and controlled environment (especially that of the school) so that they may attain social competence and optimum individual development. Whitefield (1962) defines education as 'the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge, the transfer of past knowledge, skills and values of the entire human society from generation to generation, in order to prepare the individuals for their positive contributions to themselves and their society. Education helps the individual to achieve self-fulfillment in the society. Education meets the needs of the society by equipping the individual with national awareness, promotion of unity and struggle for social, political, economic, technological and scientific development.

Education is categorized into formal, informal and non-formal. Given the slant of this paper to essentially pedagogical issues, our concern would be on formal and non-formal types of education.

Formal education refers to the education provided through schools, colleges and universities. These institutions cater for the education of children and youths. This group emerges as schooled children who expectedly take their positions in families and communities. University education also serves the purpose of literacy for professional development and job security. It develops and strengthens enquiring mind in people of various professions in order to acquire relevant skills and knowledge. This is not only to enhance the efficiency and productivity but also to help promote effective service delivery in various organizations. Formal education ultimately contributes to both the modernization and democratization of societies.

Non-formal education is also an organized learning activity outside the structure of the formal education system that is consciously aimed at meeting specific learning needs of a particular group of children, youths or adults in the community. What is learned is structured but not so obviously as in the case of formal education. There is more flexibility as to age of learner, the places of study, and the methods of teaching.

Non-formal education is also defined as any intentional and systematic educational enterprise in which content, media, time limits, admission criteria, staff, facilities and other system components are selected and/or adapted for particular student population or situations in order to examine attainment of the learning mission, maximize attainment of the learning and minimize maintenance constraints of the system (Akinpelu 1994). Training in vocational skills and adult education are usually classified under non-formal education.

The traditional purpose of non-formal education can be defined in terms of lifelong education and the provision of economic opportunities within the labour market. There is no doubt that skills do have to be acquired and that individuals should have access to such learning. It is the social and intellectual context in which this activity takes place that is in question.

In spite of international consensus on the need to fulfill the basic learning needs of all children, youths and adults initiated first by the world conference on Education for All in 1990, and reaffirmed by the World Education Forum in 2000, equitable access for all young people and adults to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes has been neglected by some developing nations like Nigeria. This is perhaps because skills, especially those associated with income generation and livelihood are believed to be “less academic” and thus less accountable for the selection of university students and because vocational skills training has been traditionally of a non-formal nature and hence not accepted as an integral part of education system.

There is no doubt that formal education concentrates so many resources on preparing the very few who are likely to go on to study at university level that it needs to adapt to the needs of the various disadvantaged groups. Only in this way can education genuinely function as a pre-requisite for economic empowerment. On the other hand, vocational skills training activities responsive as they are also require validation and sustainability.

The outcomes of skills development programmes remain uncertain in the Nigerian context with respect to both the target audience. This is especially so because of the lack of motivation among youths and adults to learn vocational skills as well as little chance for gaining economic returns from such skills development. Skills development is considered here to be the development of the skills and knowledge needed by those with limited learning ability in order to participate fully in the labour market. The provision of vocational skills training no doubt plays an important role in equipping young people and adults especially those whose learning opportunities are limited to lead more fulfilling and productive lives.

Moreover, skills development should be recognized as integrating knowledge, competencies and attitudes in the world of work, thus bringing actual benefits to the right clientele.

It is also important to note that the possession of and access to skills is central to lifelong learning. However, lifelong learning has tended to be associated most closely with utilitarian values, that is, learning to improve life chances in a liberal democracy promoting a rhetorical meritocracy. Such a conception negates the belief in education as embracing all realms of learning and development.

In the light of the above, it is unlikely that the Nigerian government is capable of sponsoring and maintaining this kind of work that might serve to challenge so fundamentally the status quo especially with the collapse of the 6-3-3-4 system of education still fresh in our memory. So the practical issue remains how any such radical work can be fostered, developed and sustained. Perhaps the real possibilities is with private sector participation. Non-government and religion

organizations for some years have expended a great deal of effort and energy in establishing and funding university education. It is auspicious for government to offer operational partnership with such organizations for the development of vocational education from the primary to the university level. This would have an impact on low income job generation while creating the conditions for increasing the quality of education. It should be noted that human capital is one of the fundamental determinants of economic growth and this economic resource is essentially determined in both qualitative and quantitative regards to education.

### **Language as a Tool**

The relationship between language, education and poverty reduction is obvious. We cannot talk of economic empowerment, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, poverty alleviation or reduction without a discourse on language – the verbal and symbolic expression of material.

Rufai (2000) defined language as the spoken means by which human beings communicate and/or interact. The functions of language are listed to include the following:

- a. Language offers an individual greater possibility of self expression. It provides a tool for exploring and analyzing conceptual processes.
- b. By acquiring the speech habits of the community, an individual becomes a full member of that society contributing his/her response to the common stock in such a manner that they will be easily recognized and stimulate reactions from others, which the person can understand.
- c. It gives access to the experiences of others, depending on the adequacy of response to experiences and that of others.

Commenting on the language functions in society, Rufai noted that the ideal situation necessitates that all communications and discussions about the five principal areas of life experiences are conducted in a language mutually intelligible among members of the society. In this case the language of government and administration would be the same as that of the governed. The laws of the land and related matters would be in the language of the society. The acquisition of skills, trades and education for economic activities would be in the society's language. Religious practice and religious studies would be in the language of the society just as much as all cultural matters and their respective manifestations would be in the language of those who adhere to the culture. What an excellent scenario that would be!

The language situation in Nigeria presents a negation of the above. The complexity of language situation in multilingual Nigeria is well known. Scholars put the number at over 400 (Okebukola 2005). There is little wonder then that the issue of language has become a major factor in the national question.

The diversity of Nigerian languages poses a difficulty for economic empowerment and by inference poverty reduction because business and other economic activities are to a large extent conducted in English. This excludes a



large proportion of Nigerians who have acquired literacy in their native languages but they are not literate in the languages of wider communication and thus are unable to make full use of their literacy skills.

The language education policy must therefore recognize the diverse contexts of literacy. Literacy is not a constant; one person may be literate in one context but illiterate in another. In most developing countries like Nigeria, economic programmes still largely focus on urban areas whereas majority of the population are found in rural settings.

Giving premium to language as a tool for educational development as well as poverty reduction also requires that our language education policy should be tilted towards the functional adoption of bilingual education which accords equal status to the indigenous languages and English. Each and every language deserves to be respected and developed side by side with the lingual Franca. However the question that arises from this discourse is: Is it possible to use all Nigerian languages for formal education? The answer is in the affirmative. Studies have confirmed the possibility of using and teaching any language at any level of formal education (Okebukola 2005). If countries like Norway, Japan, and China could do this successfully, we also can.

### **Conclusion**

The task of making learning relevant for its beneficiaries or end-users is an issue as popular as is identifying the wider benefits of learning, capturing today any educationalists attention. Lack of access to basic education leads to diminished individual and national capabilities, therewith furthering cycles of poverty. An equitable education system meeting basic learning needs represents not only a human right but also a means for economic empowerment. Perhaps the challenge is to create learning opportunities in which established learning opportunities and vocational skills can be acquired within a context of authentic critical exploration.

Whatever strategic package of means and ends for planned structural change a nation may adopt, the use and development of indigenous languages is an inescapable necessity for the orientation and re-orientation of all classes and masses and then for the reduction and re-socialization of the people to learn to build and participate in political and economic institutions and to imbibe the new culture of technology.



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# 14. Policy Crisis and the Development of English Language in Nigeria

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Nigeria, as a multilingual nation, has many languages spoken within her borders. The chaotic language situation informed the need to exercise control through government policies. The “major three” language policy in the 1999 constitution and the 1981 National Policy on Education, which came with it the introduction of English Studies, contain vital policy statements for language growth in Nigeria. This paper explains the present situation of English studies in the school system, showing the problems encountered by the teachers in the process of teaching English Studies in Junior Secondary level. It equally highlights the effects of the apparent confusion in the implementation of this approach to language teaching and learning due to non-availability of books and the lack of re-training of language teachers on this integrated approach to English Language teaching. It is observed that the National Policy on Education as it pertains to the study of English and Literature brews greater chaos and endangers the growth of English in Nigeria rather than promote it. Our investigations have revealed the need for the integrated approach and we emphasize the benefits inherent in English studies if properly implemented. It is however, suggested that literature in English be excised from English Studies if nothing can be done to check the present confusion.

## 1. Introduction

Nigeria is a multilingual nation with many languages spoken within its borders. Out of all of these languages, three are major group languages due to the population of the speakers. However, none of these languages is a national language. The founding fathers of the nation probably lacked the foresight to see the need for a national language or could not do so due to suspicion and fear of political and / or cultural domination. Unfortunately, Nigeria will never have a national language. The increasing awareness among Nigerians on the importance of one’s language as a carrier of culture and identity erodes whatever chances there are for the emergence of a national language in Nigeria. Given this scenario, English Language has come to stay in Nigeria as a national language or lingua franca and the language of education. With the grip that English has on the nationhood of Nigeria politically, socially, economically and educationally, there is the constraint to sustain it.

When a language affects the very foundation of a nation and the people as English has done in Nigeria, such a language needs policies that promote and sustain its growth rather than policies that stifle it. The 1981 National Policy on

Education, revised severally, which came with it the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 system of education, and which has subsequently spilled over into the 9-3-4 system, Universal Basic Education, frustrates the effective teaching and learning of both English and Literature in English, specifically at Junior Secondary School (JSS) level.

### **1.1 The Policy Thrust**

The National Policy on Education (1981) requires that the learners are instructed in the language of the immediate environment in the first three years at school. English takes over from primary four to the tertiary level. In the policy, English is one of the core subjects in the Junior Secondary level. The policy also provides a set of choices from a group of subjects consisting of History, Geography and Literature in English and Social Studies. The choice of one subject excludes the choice of others. Such a grouping and selection is not in the over all good of the learners. Each of these subjects has rich social and psychological inputs which the learners can draw from. Whereas the 1981 edition is sharp and specific as per the subjects to be taught at both the Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools levels, the 1998 revised edition is silent on Senior Secondary Education. It is a revision which has watered down policy thrust on national requirements for the growth of secondary education.

### **1.2 English Studies as an Expression**

In the wake of the 1981 National Policy on Education, Curriculum planners conjectured that the fusion of English and Literature in English will enhance academic performance and develop a better language culture. The intention was to relate, by way of integration, the various aspects of knowledge in literature with the ones in English for the effective teaching of the subjects. Onwuka (1999:228) explains that integration “involves the organization of materials so that the learners see the relationship between the various subjects or aspects of life”. The perception is that since literature is a reflection of life, it can complement the learning of English as a human language. With this, the different areas of knowledge are synchronized.

English Studies as conceived is an integrated approach to language teaching and learning which relates the various aspects of knowledge in literature to the ones in English. It entails the transfer of the knowledge in literature to English language, and on the other hand, the transfer of the knowledge in English to literature.

The concept of English Studies is borrowed from Integrated Science and Social Studies. Integrated Science is the fusion of the ideas in Physics, Chemistry and Biology. Similarly, Social Studies is the integration of topics in History, Geography and the other related areas of Social Science. The policy thrust for English Studies is for the application of a similar notion to the study of English and Literature in English. The design is that English and Literature may be fused to form a single subject called English Studies or better still Integrated English.

Whereas Integrated Science and Social Studies have well-defined curricular and set books which clearly articulate their policy thrust, this cannot be said of English Studies. There is no single known textbook in the country designed for the teaching of English Studies years after its inception, as it is with the other two subjects each with a three – set series of textbooks for each JSS class level.

There is no well articulated curriculum plans and syllabi for the implementation and teaching of English Studies. Even the teachers of the subject are still ignorant of what English Studies is all about. In a study conducted by the writer in 2004 to find out the state of the implementation of the policy on English Studies as an integrated approach in selected urban and rural Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State, it was discovered that the teachers were completely ignorant of what English Studies entails. All they knew was that English language was re-labelled English studies and that Literature in English no longer has a separate entry in the school timetable but alternate with literature in JSS level. Consequently, a teacher may decide to teach English Language in one instance and Literature in English in another instance. Some teachers end up not teaching literature at all thereby teaching the one they are comfortable in.

There is also a somewhat confusion in the interpretation of the structure of English Studies compared to English Language, English Literature and Literature in English. English Studies and Literature in English suggest Studies in British or Commonwealth affairs and Literature. It includes studies in English Language, Literature, History, Culture etc. It is to avoid this that Literature in English is a preferred option for study outside Britain and American. Therefore, issues like this have further heightened the crisis in policy implementation regarding the study of English and Literature in Nigeria.

### **1.3 A Critique of the National Policy on Education**

Before the advent of English studies, the norm was the teaching of English Language and Literature in English as two separate subjects. Each subject, with its set texts, was allotted separate teaching periods in the school timetable. Taking Akwa Ibom State as a case in point, English had five periods a week while Literature had two periods a week. Presently, English Studies has five periods a week while literature is carefully omitted with the view that it is subsumed under English Studies. Literature, therefore, becomes an appendage of the English Language. Its teaching depends on the whims and caprices of the teacher.

The subordination of literature to English partly accounts for students poor performance in English. Literature which would have helped to vitalize the language is not emphasized as observed by Mayhead (1979). The importance of literature as a school subject is far-beyond story-telling. It is emotive and interpretive; appealing to the emotion and the senses of the reader and so induces critical thinking. The devaluation of literature as a school subject and further embedding it in English Studies is the devaluation of its contributions to the effective learning of English.

To the Nigerian bilingual who needs English to 'belong' because of the inclusive nature of English in Nigeria, the teacher is the sole motivator in the task of learning the language. Denying the learners the opportunity to learn literature, tantamounts to denying them the joy inherent in extensive reading and the attendant crippling of their thought processes. As observed in the research, a great majority of the teachers lack the patience to read literature texts because it is time-consuming, coupled with lack of supervision to ensure compliance. The teachers also, erroneously though, regard literature texts as story books which learners can read for fun with or without the guidance of the teacher. Bisong (1996: 223) encourages the effective teaching of literature as a major contribution to language development. He discourages the teachers from "handing out interpretation of texts which they expect learners to accept unquestioningly". He advocates for the involvement of the learners to develop their minds.

The study of the Akwa Ibom situation revealed that those teachers who cared to teach the literature component of English Studies ignored the integrated approach thereby failing to intensify efficient reading, oral drills, comprehension and summary abilities using the medium of literature. They failed to emphasize certain aspects of grammar like sentence structure, the use of words in context and in isolation, and the expression of meaning according to context including pragmatics.

Unfortunately, the teachers are not guided, trained and re-trained to properly internalize the requirements of the policy. It is a crisis in policy, a policy somersault to float a new subject without adequate interpretation and appropriate texts to reflect the new approach. Moreso, to leave to the teachers, without effective monitoring and supervision, the teaching of English Studies is the more dangerous for effective acquisition of English.

To worsen the situation, there is no known English studies textbook in the country as it is with Integrated Science and Social Studies. *Integrated English Books 1 – 3* by Fagbemi et al (1998) and *Intensive English for Secondary Schools Books 1 – 3* by Oluikpe et al (1991) are not integrated both in form and content. These are the recommended texts for English Studies in Akwa Ibom State, for instance.

The general contents of these books are the usual topics on speech or pronunciation practice, language practice, intensive reading, guided conversation, language structure, spelling, pronunciation, dictation, mechanics as well as composition. The texts are designed to help the learners master the mechanics of English without any recourse to aesthetic use of language and a touch on the emotional aspect of language. Maintaining the status quo in the texts as it is defeats the essence of English Studies which is to expose the learners to the fact that language learning is not a mechanical process. It is generative, emotive and therefore mentalistic. It is the soul of the human person.

A further defect in the policy implementation, our study of Akwa Ibom State also reveals, that since the inception of the National Policy on Education in 1981, even with all the revisions of the policy, no JSS 3 examination set by the



Examinations Division of the State Ministry of Education reflects the integrated approach. Two separate sets of questions are made each for English and Literature. At no point do questions reflect the symbiosis of ideas intended for English Studies. In some schools, some students do not even answer questions in Literature in JSS 3 examinations because literature is not taught. The abounding confusion invalidates the mindset of the policy planners and calls for a re-appraisal. Worst of all, the policy handbook (1998 revised edition) is replete with grammatical errors, spelling errors, incomplete sentences and structural anomalies which justify the falling standard of language education.

#### **1.4 The Benefits of English Studies**

The value of English Studies lies in the cross-fertilization of ideas, as facts and principles in one field is injected into another to strengthen and facilitate quick understand. Grammar, for instance, can elucidate the understanding of literature. Efanga (1998:63) shows how grammatical classes may be taught in a literature class using the examples below:

- 1(a) For as you were when first your *eye I eyed* such seems your duty still  
(William Shakespeare)
- (b) I fear that the human race may with steel *walls wall* me (Louis Mac Niece)
- (c) Whether the charmer *sinner it or saint* it, if folly grows romantic, I must paint it. (Alexander Pope)

Using these lines from literature texts, the teacher can lead the learners to understand that in (1a), the word “eye” is used both as a noun (eye) and as a verb (eyed). In (1b), “wall” is used as a noun (walls) and as a verb (wall) while in (1c), “sinner” and “saint” belong to the grammatical class of noun but function as a verb in the context. What is instructive in this method is the reduction of the verses from the unknown, the abstract world of poetry, to the known, the grammatical classes. The teaching is elevated from the drab regurgitation of grammatical rules to the emotive in which the human mind is involved, making the class interesting and captivating. It sensitizes the learners to a higher horizon of ingenuity in language use. The position is that in as much as language teaching must propel the production skills, it must not overwhelm the study of literature to avoid hatred for the later when it is eventually introduced as a single subject in SS1. Efanga (1998) cautions against this, warning that when children are first presented with the dry bones, in the end, they hate and reject the bone, the flesh and even the marrow.

Literature as a subject provides the medium for extended insight into functional language use in inter-subject and inter-textual forms. The learners are exposed to functional use of words; the different shades of meanings in words usage and various structural differences in sentence patterns. Each of the three genres of literature: drama, prose and poetry is unique in organization, content and expression. Povey (1979) remarks that the study of literature builds up all



language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) by extending linguistic knowledge; presenting the different styles in language use. Above all, it is a motivator to creativity serving as the springboard to creative writing. Failure to teach literature and effectively too, threatens the creative potentials of the learners and cripples their sensibilities.

It is even the more frustrating to observe that literature is paired with History. A child who offers literature cannot, at the same time offer History. History is rich in vocabulary which can help build up a child's word power. Because History as a subject discipline is elaborate and expansive, it wittingly cultivates a reading culture in the individual. A lazy student, therefore, cannot perform well in History. We should note that a nation without History is a nation without a past and lacks direction for the future. The policy that denies the Nigerian child the opportunity to study History, Literature and Geography threatens the humanity in the person.

Another advantage of English Studies is in the development of vocabulary. What the learner is taught as word building in language class is further strengthened in the literature class. The subject matter of literature is on all conceivable human activities. The language reflects the situation of the activity. So, there is no vocabulary boundary in literature. The language adjusts in each instance in conformity with the situation. Each situation occurs with its registers and expressive mode. The learner is familiar with different styles of writing which is not possible in pure language topics. The study of grammar is further enhanced, the aftermath being the building up of communicative competence in conversational, transactional and conventional usages of language.

Williams (1990:269) gives a synopsis of the merits of the study of literature and the effect on the development of language ability asserting that:

... through literature study, the second language learner can internalize and consciously adopt the rhythms of natural speech (as in drama), economy and richness of diction (as in poetry), rhetorical and organizational devices (as in prose).

English studies, thus, advocates a symbiosis of knowledge between language and literature. A better understanding of concord, tense, mood, aspect, sentence patterns, figurative and idiomatic expressions is further intensified in the literature class. The present practice whereby most teachers carefully avoid the teaching of literature because it has no separate entry in the school timetable should be discouraged. It smacks of failure in the policy, which rather than promote English language learning as it was conceived, endangers the development. The fact is that the learners are denied the chance of deriving benefit from the complementary role which Literature and History played in proficiency in English before the new policy came on stream.

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**1.5 The Effect of Poor Implementation**

The poor implementation of the policy on English Studies has a negative effect on the development of the language ability of the Nigerian bilingual learning English as a second language. It affects fluency in speech and proficiency in spoken and written English. The learners are denied the joy and the chance to appreciate the aesthetic values of language in the creative use of language in literature as exposed by figures of speech such as irony, oxymoron, paradox, metaphor, hyperbole, personification etc. The learners are denied the opportunity of reading biographies and autobiographies of great minds.

The failure to effectively implement the policy on the integrated approach to language teaching and learning has resulted in the loss of the opportunity to strengthen the understanding of phonology. The learners fail to appreciate the rhythmic effect of sound on language and the relationship between oral English and sound devices in literature. The learners find it difficult to establish the natural link between the stress patterns in English language class and its effect on foot and metre (eg. iambic pentameter, iambic tetrameter) in literature class. They fail to observe the relationship between the segmentals (vowels and consonants) and such sound devices in literature as assonance (the internal repetition of vowel sounds) and alliteration (the repetition of initial consonant sounds). The knowledge of segmentals and supra-segmentals of English enhances the understanding of the application of supra-segmental features in literature like the rhymes, rhyme scheme, rhythm and the creation of musical effect, including the effect of punctuation as a carrier of meaning, syllabification and spellings in English.

The new approach is to show that language is not simply learned by imitation and that learning a language is not rote learning but creative use of language. Chomsky (1972:12) says that

... normal use of language is innovative in the sense that much of what we say in the course of normal language use is entirely new, not a repetition of anything we have heard before, and not even similar pattern - in any useful sense of the terms discourse that we have heard in the past.

Based on the submission, the argument is that language learning does not simply involve acquisition of a set of linguistic habits as claimed by behavioural psychologists, a background which still informs the teaching of English as a second language in Nigeria today. Language learning is rather a rule-governed creativity according to cognitive psychologists. The rule-governed creativity is greater explained in the field of literature.

What is canvassed for is the making of learners with demonstrable ability in linguistic competence and good performance ability. From the teaching, the learned should extract a system of rules underlying the language he is learning, then formulate his hypothesis for making grammatical and ungrammatical sentences. He should develop the ability to distinguish grammatical constructions

which are correct and acceptable and incorrect and unacceptable expressions in the language. It will also make him aware of the deviant forms of the language and knowing the extent to which they are deviant, knowing the structure of sentences, oddity in sentence constructions, establish the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic relationships, showing the relationship of collocation and substitution including the ability to identify ambiguities both structural and lexical.

Internalization of the knowledge of the language is then measured in the quality of performance both syntactically and pragmatically. Learning the language should also include the ability to interpret non-linguistic information such as background knowledge and personal belief in one's use of sentences which abound in literature. The totality of the experiences is developing both grammatical and pragmatic competence, an expression of functional language use.

English Studies is thus concerned with the promotion of functional language use which is performance oriented. Obinna (2004:449) argues that English Studies was designed for the improvement of the ability to use English language both practically and idiosyncratically in order to cultivate the habit of impersonal use of language. He concludes that language is not only a tool for instruction, but also for "human perception, emotion, volition and thought". It is expressive when given form and content. English Studies as highlighted affects all the components of English and Literature in English "weaving together ideas from the various disciplines to contribute in many ways to the development of language ability".

### **1.7 Conclusion**

The *National Policy on Education* as it affects the integration of English and Literature frustrates proficiency in English rather than enhance its development. Urgent need arises for the re-appraisal of this policy which has resulted in a crisis, confusion and chaos. The advocacy is against the backdrop of the negative pedagogic implications of this policy on the Nigerian child who needs English as a language to belong.

It is proposed that the studies of English and Literature be well-defined since each of these subjects has rich inputs for the growth of language ability. In addition to this, a well-defined syllabi and clearly articulated textbooks reflecting the background of the policy are needed. Above all, the teachers should be re-trained on the demands of English Studies and at the same time be well-supervised to implement the policy plan.

On the contrary, if nothing can be done to correct the defect in the policy implementation and check the apparent confusion, it is compelling to return to the status quo whereby Literature in English and English language as well as History and Geography are taught as separate subjects at Junior Secondary School. It is hoped that these measures will solve, to a large extent, the existing crisis threatening language education in Nigeria.

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## **15. Multilingualism & National Development: The Nigerian Situation**

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In a heterogeneous and multilingual society such as Nigeria, there is the need for a common and indigenous language that will unite the people and bring about national development. This will forestall the attendant problems of multilingualism such as disunity, anarchy, chaos, etc. The development and growth of the society cannot be separated from languages, which link the people together. A common and indigenous language makes for understanding and mutual cooperation. It is the contention of this paper to project that the use of a common language that is indigenous to the people will lead to national unity and development.

### **Introduction**

There is no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria is a heterogeneous society. And multilingualism thrives in heterogeneous society, that is, societies or communities that their inhabitants speak different languages. Nigeria is a multilingual society made of more than 250 ethnic groups with a conservative estimate of 400 languages (see Banjo 1975, Bamgbose 1971, Hansford 1976, Ubahakwe 1973, Tomori 1973, Elugbe 1980, Akindele and Adegbite 1992, Farinde 1999, 2000).

Problems that arise out of this include dissociation, racial discrimination, segregation, cultural and political antagonism and disintegration. Because of these multifarious problems, there is the need for a national language and that language must be an indigenous language. In a national language, the individual sees the main traditional bond that holds the community together. It is seen as a vehicle for educating the citizens of a state to cultivate the spirit of solidarity and also as a symbol of national personality. It enhances loyalty, unity, allegiance etc. A national language helps a great in playing down internal differences. Sapir (1940) buttressed this by saying "... the mere fact of a common speech serves as a peculiar potent symbol of the social solidarity of those who speak the language".

However, while Sapir's statement can, in many cases apply to just any language which a group of people happens to have in common, we find that in Nigeria, this only applies to our indigenous languages. This is because we felt that English is a foreign language and we cannot identify ourselves with it. On the other hand, this solidarity exists between people of the same ethnic region, for example, Yoruba. That is why, in this paper we are canvassing for the adoption of an indigenous language for national language as this will lead to the much desired national unity and development.



### **Features of Multilingualism in Nigeria**

The history of Nigeria shows from earliest times that Nigeria through a natural phenomenon thus-the Niger/Benue “Y” shaped rivers- is divided into three major areas. These are the North, the West and the East. This earliest division corresponds with the three major language groups in Nigeria, the Hausa in the North, the Yoruba in the West and the Igbo in the East. Beyond these major language groups, as said earlier, it is estimated that more than four hundred indigenous languages are spoken in Nigeria (N.T.I.1990).

With this complex language situation, Nigeria then faces complex ethnic groupings with very perplexing linguistic problems. The implication of this is the absence of a common, easy and effective communication between the numerous groups. This means limited interaction among the various linguistic groups which in turn leads to a cultural and political antagonism. This is where the search for a national language comes in. This is because loyalty, unity and allegiance and the likes can be found only among the different groups of the same common linguistic background and this leads credence to the proposal of an indigenous language as a national language.

### **The English Language Shortcomings in Nigeria**

The English language was introduced into the country as the language of a dominant minority comprising merchants who came to exploit local resources for the enhancement of their home economy: missionaries who subverted indigenous culture in the attempt to souls for Christ, and the colonial functionaries who came to conquer, subjugate and rule (Osundare 1982).

It is the truth that in Nigeria English is the only neutral language. It serves almost all purposes: official, trade and commerce, education, international communication and inter-ethnic interaction. But despite this vast influence of the English language in Nigeria, it is still regarded as a language of the elite classes. The language is only accessible to a small minority of the populace. Elugbe (1990) posits that people are being misled into thinking that English is our national language. It is being taught nationwide and so, has the whole country as its geographical constituency. He, however, maintains that its constituency is small-exceedingly small, and in fact, amorphous. Bamgbose (1982) cuts the figure of Nigerians able to speak English as low as 10 percent.

Osundare (1995) observes: “... problems are bound to arise when attempts are made to articulate one culture in the language of another”. Against the background that English is alien to Africa, he further contends that every African writer writing in an European language faces the nagging problems of articulating the experience of the culture in the language of another. He believes that in man’s universal cultural pattern, each strand is a significant entity. Still trying to empathize with the creative writer, he further observes:

... the writer attempts to render in English the figures and tropes of L1, striving consciously and often times laboriously to preserve their original

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flavour, the rhythms, cadences of their sentences, their idiomatic and proverbial authenticity, and even their situations in dramatic occasions.

Amayo (1987) argues that language is the greatest instrument for the cultural, political and socio-economic mobilization of a people. One obvious assumption of this observation is that for to serve as an instrument of mass mobilization, it has to be understood by all (or at least a vast majority) of the people to be mobilized. In other words, English language cannot serve as an instrument for total development, since it is only accessible to a small minority of the populace. Thus, only Nigeria language can serve as the symbol of group identity and the vehicle of mass mobilization in Nigeria.

### **Language Policy and National Development**

Because of all the problems of multilingualism enumerated above and the lack of contribution of English language to national development, Osundare (1982) opines:

The government has a duty to institute a progressive language policy to de-emphasize English and upgrade indigenous languages.

We, therefore, need a language that is national and that can be used for wider communication. It is in realization of this, that in 1979, the government made some policy statements which are enshrined in the constitution. Section 51 of the Nigerian constitution of 1979, 1989 stipulates:

The business of the Nation Assembly shall be conducted in Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba when adequate arrangement have been made.

Section 91 of the same document also read as follows:

The business of a house of Assembly shall be conducted in English, but the House may in addition to English conduct the business of the House in one or more other languages spoken in the State of the House which they may by resolution approve.

A critical look at this policy statements suggest that the three major languages (Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba) are being accorded the status of national languages on an equal basis even though their operation as such must be preceded by adequate planning. The second one is significant in that it provides for language policy at the state level, with respect to the use of indigenous languages in the state legislatures. The provision makes it possible for the respective local languages to be adopted for use along with English in the state legislatures (Agheisi 1985).

A brief look at the contemporary situation in the country reveals that national consciousness and unity are goals to be attained because a large proportion of the

nation is kept perpetually in the dark because contemporary Nigerian life is dominated by English language which the government lords over the people. This situation should be reversed if we want to ensure national consciousness. If national development is to be achieved in this country, education, literacy and public enlightenment programmes must be packaged in as many Nigerian languages as spoken by people at the grassroots level.

Community and rural development projects must be carried out with active participation of the local people concerned and in a language that they can readily understand (Babalola 1998).

Ayilara and Adedeji (2000) assert that indigenous languages have vital roles to play in the attainment of democracy in Nigeria. Since Nigeria is a multilingual nation. The knowledge of many of the indigenous languages in Nigeria will be of interest to politicians in political enlightenment. For the effective discussion in our parliamentarians, they should use indigenous languages.

Priority has also been given to Nigerian languages under the constitution as the languages to be used at all levels of the legislative houses. This has therefore permitted the conduct of all business of the Houses of Assembly and National Assembly to be carried out in Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba when and where desirable, which clearly stated that under any effective democratic system of government, there should be:

An elected government passing law in a language which the people could understand, so that they could discuss them with newspaper reporting the discussion and the politicians addressing the people directly in their own language either face-to-face or through the medium of broadcasting and television, with the judges and lawyers discussing the law in the language in which the plaintiff and defendants instruct their counsel.(Maikanti, 2000).

In essence, what the language policy is tending towards is the gradualist approach which the present writer is advancing in this paper. Bamgbose (1976) asserts that the gradualist approach involves planned multilingualism until one language evolves as the national language. To achieve unity and national development in any human community, we need a programme of mass mobilization in order to harness all human and material resources towards the achievement of the objective and the gradualist approach is the greatest tool for such mass mobilization.

### **Indigenous Languages and National Development**

Phelps-stroke commission's report of 1922 submits: "Indigenous African languages should be given the pride of place as media of instruction for Africans of school age". The mother tongue is as important as English language in African education because it is one of the means of preserving all that is good in the customs, ideas and ideals of African communities... for such a person to be well educated and learn more about his culture, the mother tongue of such a person

should be used as a medium of communication. The various development of indigenous languages have shown that people at various educational levels in all subjects if the mother tongue is used as medium of instruction. Instead of thinking deeply before understanding what is being taught in foreign languages and interpreting them into their own languages, the use of indigenous languages facilitates learning (Ayilara and Oyedeji 2000).

Furthermore, technologies are best learned in the language of the child and not in foreign language. Akindele and Adegbite (1992) argue that in Nigeria, one of the main reasons advanced for her poor technological growth and development is that the language for science and technology is foreign (English). Science and technology could only be developed if expressed in the language that a community understands. Because the English language does not reach the majority of the Nigerian populace, then science and technology in the country cannot be well developed. They contend that indigenous technology such as blacksmithing, dyeing and so on could be well developed beyond its present state of foreign experiences if the latter are made available to indigenous technologists and scientists. In other words, such scientists and technologists could borrow ideas from the contemporary science and technology and adapt them to the indigenous mode of science and technology as Japan has done.

One of the advantages of developing the vast majority of our languages is that nobody will be left out of the development process. More importantly, nobody will think or feel that he is being left out. By this, national integration and national development are thus promoted. And in the long run, an indigenous language will emerge as the national language of the country.

Moreover, the use of indigenous languages is the vehicle for mass participation in the national politics. Because the language of politics is foreign, the people cannot be reached in their entire populace. Therefore, the extension of indigenous languages into the domain of national politics would enhance mass participation of people in the national politics. Elugbe (1989) asserts as follows:

In terms of mass participation in government, there is a good case for developing our national languages. Democracy, which is our goal cannot truly exist where only an elitist few (in this case, the speakers of English) can participate. As a matter of fact, trying to make the masses see the issues in an election is meaningless where the people cannot be reached.

## **Conclusion**

From the foregoing, we can conclude that national language is crucial but may never be achieved unless we make conscious and deliberate efforts to embark on a long-term national language project. Government should assist by providing financial, material and human resources in the development of the indigenous languages. By this, we hope that in the long run, one of them will emerge comfortably as the national language for the country.

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# 16. Language Empowering through Competition: The Case of Bwatiye

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The paper delves into the issue of language endangerment, using the Bwatiye language spoken mainly in Adamawa State, Nigeria, as a case study. Issues of endangerment as they relate to the language are discussed. It is shown that the language is indeed under threat. As a panacea, language competitions with the view of actively promoting the use of the language are organized. The paper discusses the participants at the language competitions in Yola and Mubi in Adamawa State. The scoring areas – salutation content points, fluency and incidence of code-switching are discussed as they relate to the different age grades. The results reveal that irrespective of age, there is a drop in the use of the language. It is shown that competitions like the one discussed in the paper go a long way in empowering endangered languages.

## **Introduction**

Nigeria has a very large number of languages. Speakers of these language constantly interact therefore there is normally the sociolinguistic fact of who speaks what language to whom when and where. In daily interactions, the major languages are used more often than the non-major ones. In other words, the languages vary in terms of vitality. The buck stops on the feet of the speakers of non-major languages as regards their languages' survival. Once there is no intergenerational transmission, the languages cease to exist with the death of the last speaker.

## **Language Endangerment**

That a lot of languages are now endangered is no longer debatable. Emenanjo (1999; 80-81) states the preconditions for endangerment. There are: small number of speakers; being located within a bilingual/multilingual, bicultural, multicultural environment; absence of language policy; absence of vibrant milieu for intergenerational usage; imperatives of the enthronement of democracy and death of the family in the modern interactive society and the pluralisation of values in modern societies.

These conditions above are also found in Dwyer, Arienne, Brenzinger & Yamamoto (:2004). Titled "Yardsticks for Language Vitality and the state of endangerment" there are nine in number. These are listed below:

- 1) Intergenerational Language Transmission
- 2) Absolute number of speakers

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- 3) Proportion of speakers with the total population
  - 4) Loss of existing language domains
  - 5) Response to new domains and media
  - 6) Materials for language education and literacy
  - 7) Governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies
  - 8) Community members' attitudes toward their own language.
  - 9) Amount and quality of documentation.

### **The Bwatiye Language and Language Endangerment**

Our language of focus in this paper is Bwatiye. This language is classified linguistically thus: Chadic Class; Biu-Mandara Branch; Bata – Gude Group. There are two main dialects of the language. These are Bachama and Bata. The number of the speakers is unknown, just as this statement is true of virtually all Nigerian languages. Most of what obtains is guesswork. CAPRO publication (1992) gives a figure of 150,000 for each of the dialects. The undeniable fact is that the language is spoken in ten local government areas in Adamawa State, Nigeria. The Bata is, in addition, spoken in the neighbouring Cameroon.

A look at the preconditions for endangerment pointed out earlier reveals that the language is facing the threats of endangerment: Location of the speakers is one of the factors qualifying the Bwatiye language to remain in the threatened class. Adamawa State has a very large number of languages. This is estimated to be 70 (Bleambo, 1999). The speakers of the Bwatiye language live in linguistically heterogeneous communities and are therefore bilingual in nature. The major language, in this case, Hausa, becomes the ultimate beneficiary in this scramble for speakers.

Intergenerational transmission of the Bwatiye language is low. This is because of the development in the society that allows for more inter-marriages; the movement of the young ones to the cities for jobs. They usually find themselves living among people among with whom the use of the mother tongue is limited.

As for the absolute number of speakers of this language, there is no authentic figure. But it is obvious that the number of speakers of their language particularly outside its home area is nothing compared to the speakers of other languages combined. Therefore, the chances that one would find a speaker of their language outside their home are indeed rare. With the growth of social intercourse and the matters of education and indeed the loss of transmission, areas of the use of language are fast decreasing. Thus the use of the language has diminished or even disappeared in worship and market domains.

This situation tallies with the conclusion drawn in Munzali (1990:116) thus:

What this means is that the lingua francas are going to get stronger and languages which have restricted currency are going to be weakened to extinction

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**Empowerment as a Panacea to Endangerment**

Languages that are under threat can only be salvaged by positive action of the native speakers in the first place as well as the intervention of linguists interested in language promotion and retention. This is an important issue particularly when each language, no matter how few its speakers, is seen as unique. This is as found in Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights of June, 1966. "All languages are the expression of a collective identity of a distinct way of perceiving and describing reality".

No meaningful success can be achieved in language empowerment without the native speakers. As stated in Williamson (1999:142),

The fate of small languages is in the hands of the speakers. If they wish their languages to grow and develop, they should take steps not only to use it themselves but to ensure that their children are adequately exposed to it.

The role of the community is equally captured in UNESCO approved document of March, 2003 entitled 'Language Vitality and Endangerment' (Dwyer, Arianne, Brenzinger & Yamamoto 2004):

... it is the community people, not outsiders, who maintain or abandon their language; it is their choice if and how to revitalize, maintain, and fortify their language

The incursion of other languages into the Bwatiye language has sounded like a wake up call. A number of people therefore took it upon themselves to raise the level of consciousness in form of competitions.

**The Language Competition**

The language competition is a forum by which people with shared concern of the precarious position of the language meet. The forum is an avenue for a conscious improvement of the competencies and performances.

There have been in recent times Bwatiye language competitions. These are featured as varieties in Bwatiye Student Union Days fondly referred to as BWASU Days. These were in July 2005 in the Federal Polytechnic Mubi, August 2006 at the Adamawa State University, Mubi and October 2006 at Government Secondary School Numan.

However, the solely Bwatiye language competition was that 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2004 held at the Women Development Centre, Yola. Tagged Vwapatu Bwe Kwa Bwatiye "Competition for the speaking of the Kwa Bwatiye Language", it was meant to be an all-Bwatiye-affair. It was sponsored by Chairman of Lamurde Local Government, Mr. Seth Crowther.

The programme was printed in the Bwatiye language as follows:

| <i><b>Bwatiye Language</b></i>            | <i><b>English Translation</b></i>         |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <i>Tula ta Bware</i>                      | Arrival of Guests                         |
| <i>Mya Hiwomi</i>                         | Opening prayer                            |
| <i>Buldo mi gboriye Tifito</i>            | Introduction of Officials                 |
| <i>Waya ha da Kpana</i>                   | Chairman's Welcome Address                |
| <i>Ji Wure Hido</i>                       | Dance by Cultural Troupe                  |
| <i>Maka jiritu Tifito</i>                 | Speech by the Convener                    |
| <i>Byalata Patrick Bleambo</i>            | Speech by Patrick Bleambo                 |
| <i>Byeleda Kpanatu Vwapato</i>            | Speech by the Chairperson of the Occasion |
| <i>Kpeyo Wure</i>                         | Dance by the second Cultural Troupe       |
| <i>Vwapatu Kwamoto Nodo Kiwato</i>        | Competition based on Age Grades           |
| <i>Sabwa habye</i>                        | Refreshment                               |
| <i>Kpeyo Vwapato zo mbatu vwapata</i>     | Competition Continues                     |
| <i>Dyemshi Murounne</i>                   | Songs                                     |
| <i>Mwakuno Wure</i>                       | Dance by Cultural Troupe                  |
| <i>Waga Kwaki mye Zummi</i>               | Announcement of Winners                   |
| <i>Byelo gwaha du ha ka mikpponkpanye</i> | Speeches by Elders                        |
| <i>Gbo tifito</i>                         | Closing Remarks                           |

### Code-Switching in Some Select Speeches

In as much as the event was meant to demonstrate the use of the language, there nevertheless were instances where the speakers resorted to the use of words from other languages. They were engaged in code switching. By code switching is meant the use of two or more languages within the same strength of utterance by the same speaker (Sankoff: 1973). This is trait of multilingual communities where everyone shares the same social system which requires multiple languages.

Details are contained in the Appendix, while the table below gives the summary

| Speakers | Speech Length | Incidence of Switches | Switches into <b>English</b> |            | Switches in to <b>Hausa</b> |            |
|----------|---------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|
|          |               |                       | Number                       | Percentage | Numbers                     | Percentage |
| 1        | 4             | 13                    | 4                            | 38.78      | 9                           | 68.2       |
| 2        | 3             | 11                    | 0                            | 00         | 11                          | 100        |
| 3        | 14            | 50                    | 8                            | 15.2       | 43                          | 81.7       |
| 4        | 4             | 12                    | 9                            | 74.97      | 3                           | 24.99      |
| 5        | 3             | 11                    | 2                            | 18.18      | 9                           | 81.81      |
| TOTAL    | 28            | 98                    | 23                           | 23.5       | 75                          | 76.5       |

A look at the incidence of code switching in the speeches delivered at the occasion under discussion shows the dominance by the Hausa language (77%). English language occurs rarely (23%).

The figures contained in the table above show that the longer the duration of the speech, the more the number of incidences of code switching. The only instance where the incidence of code switching in English was higher than Hausa was in the speech of speaker 4 who spoke more specifically on educational matters. Thus it is the situation defining variables such as setting, audience, topic

that determine the kind of code switching (Sankoff: 1968) our concern here is not to give a detailed discussion on code switching, but just to point out how strong the influences of Hausa and English

### **Performance of Age Grades in the Competition**

The competition proper had the following number of participants, as indicated below:

| Age Range           | 50 Years and Above | 36-49 Years | 25-35 Years |
|---------------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| No. of Participants | 6                  | 11          | 11          |

Their performances are contained in the tables that follow.

#### *Age Grade 50 Years and above*

| Participants | Salutation | Points | Fluency | Total | Penalty for Code Switching | Score |
|--------------|------------|--------|---------|-------|----------------------------|-------|
| 1            | 10         | 40     | 30      | 70    | 2                          | 68    |
| 2            | 10         | 41     | 17      | 68    | 2                          | 66    |
| 3            | 9          | 42     | 21      | 72    | 0                          | 72    |
| 4            | 10         | 42     | 21      | 73    | 2                          | 71    |
| 5            | 0          | 40     | 21      | 61    | 0                          | 61    |
| 6            | 8          | 35     | 16      | 50    | 1                          | 58    |
| Averages     | 7.8        | 40     | 21      |       | 1.16                       | 66    |

#### *Age Grade 36-49 Years*

| Participants | Salutation | Points | Fluency | Total | Penalty for Code Switching | Score |
|--------------|------------|--------|---------|-------|----------------------------|-------|
| 1            | 10         | 35     | 13      | 58    | 2                          | 56    |
| 2            | 0          | 59     | 13      | 77    | 1                          | 76    |
| 3            | 0          | 42     | 13      | 55    | 1                          | 54    |
| 4            | 0          | 66     | 17      | 83    | 1                          | 82    |
| 5            | 0          | 54     | 16      | 70    | 2                          | 68    |
| 6            | 10         | 59     | 13      | 82    | 2                          | 80    |
| 7            | 0          | 66     | 16      | 82    | 2                          | 80    |
| 8            | 10         | 53     | 15      | 78    | 1                          | 77    |
| 9            | 0          | 54     | 14      | 68    | 1                          | 67    |
| 10           | 0          | 34     | 12      | 46    | 2                          | 44    |
| 11           | 0          | 36     | 12      | 48    | 0                          | 48    |
| Averages     | 2.72       | 50.7   | 15.4    |       | 1.3                        | 66.5  |



*Age Grade 25 – 35 Years*

| Participants | Salutation | Points | Fluency | Total | Penalty for Code-Switching | Score |
|--------------|------------|--------|---------|-------|----------------------------|-------|
| 1            | 0          | 23     | 14      | 37    | 5                          | 32    |
| 2            | 0          | 33     | 17      | 50    | 3                          | 47    |
| 3            | 0          | 27     | 15      | 42    | 6                          | 36    |
| 4            | 9          | 40     | 19      | 59    | 0                          | 59    |
| 5            | 0          | 44     | 21      | 65    | 1                          | 64    |
| 6            | 0          | 34     | 17      | 51    | 5                          | 46    |
| 7            | 0          | 17     | 13      | 30    | 0                          | 30    |
| 8            | 0          | 26     | 18      | 44    | 0                          | 44    |
| 9            | 10         | 31     | 19      | 60    | 3                          | 57    |
| 10           | 0          | 48     | 19      | 67    | 1                          | 66    |
| 11           | 0          | 19     | 12      | 31    | 3                          | 28    |
| Averages     | 1.72       | 38.5   | 16.7    |       | 4.5                        | 46.2  |

**Performance at the Competition**

The venue of the competition was quite spacious. The event was well publicized and so there were about 1000 people. The audience was actively engaged as their views were sought at several moments. The event lasted for about five hours. The scoring done by a team of five judges was in the following areas. Salutation, Content points, fluency and incidence of code switching.

*Salutation*

This refers to the greeting of the audience by the participants. As an essential part of culture, participants were judged in this area. It will be seen that the higher the age of the participant, the higher the level of compliance with this aspect of culture. There is therefore a need for the young ones to be tutored on the need to imbibe the culture of greeting.

| <i>Age Range</i>                     | 50 Years and Above | 36-49 Years | 25-35 Years |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <i>Average Scoring in Salutation</i> | 7.8                | 2.72        | 1.72        |

*Content Points*

There was no influence on age in the scores obtained in this area as the average scores show. The questions also varied. Participants of age grade 50 and above were asked to describe the most interesting thing that happened in their life in the preceding year, those in age grade 36 to 49 were given an illustration to describe while those in age grade 25 to 35 were asked to explain what they did from morning to night of the previous day. The only common thing in the questioning was the proverb completion and interpretation testing. The results show that those between ages 36-49 performed better.

| <i>Age Range</i>                    | 50 Years and Above | 36-49 Years | 25-35 Years |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <i>Average Scores in Salutation</i> | 40                 | 50.7        | 38.5        |

*Fluency*

The result show that age has a significant impact on fluency. The older persons were more fluent in the use of the Bwatiye language. However, there is not much difference in the scores obtained by the other two grades in the area of fluency.

| <i>Age Range</i>                 | 50 Years and Above | 36-49 Years | 25-35 Years |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <i>Average Scores in Fluency</i> | 21                 | 15.4        | 16.7        |

*Incidence of Code-Switching*

The scores in this area do not allow marked difference in the performances of different age grades. Nevertheless, it will be seen that the older the participants were, the less their penalties in the incidence of code switching.

| <i>Age Range</i>                                      | 50 Years and Above | 36-49 Years | 25-35 Years |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <i>Average Penalty in Incidence of Code Switching</i> | 1.16               | 1.3         | 1.5         |

**Conclusion**

The issue of endangerment of language is a serious matter. There is generation gap in virtually all aspects of life. The role of language in promoting and preserving culture can never be over-flogged. The competition discussed here is more or less a stakeholders forum. People need to meet and discuss the problems.

The beauty of the Bwatiye example in language competition is that those with the wherewithal were ready to sponsor the competition by way of full publicity refreshment and prize-award. Those with knowledge of the language were given a free hand to conduct the competition. The audience was indeed involved even in making suggestions on the conduct of the competition.

However, the success of the event cannot be measured in terms of the participation and publicity. It is in the change of attitude of the speakers to their language and in practically keeping the language alive by using it.

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**Appendix: Code Switching In Some Select Speeches**

**Speaker 1**

| S/No | Words               | Language | S/No | Words               | Language |
|------|---------------------|----------|------|---------------------|----------|
| 1    | Secretary           | English  | 8    | Kusa                | Hausa    |
| 2    | Traditional Council | English  | 9    | Kaman               | Hausa    |
| 3    | Permanent Secretary | English  | 10   | Jiya                | Hausa    |
| 4    | Kokari              | Hausa    | 11   | Asiri               | Hausa    |
| 5    | Ko                  | Hausa    | 12   | Kaman               | Hausa    |
| 6    | Kuma                | Hausa    | 13   | Permanent Secretary | English  |
| 7    | Ma                  | Hausa    |      |                     |          |

**Speaker 2**

| S/No | Words | Language | S/No | Words | Language |
|------|-------|----------|------|-------|----------|
| 1    | Barka | Hausa    | 7    | Akwai | Hausa    |
| 2    | Amma  | Hausa    | 8    | Amma  | Hausa    |
| 3    | Ma    | Hausa    | 9    | Karan | Hausa    |
| 4    | Ko    | Hausa    | 10   | Barka | Hausa    |
| 5    | Ko    | Hausa    | 11   | Amma  | Hausa    |
| 6    | Ko    | Hausa    |      |       |          |

**Speaker 3**

| S/No | Words               | Language | S/No | Words      | Language |
|------|---------------------|----------|------|------------|----------|
| 1    | Sai                 | Hausa    | 21   | Bauda      | Hausa    |
| 2    | Kuma                | Hausa    | 22   | Bauda      | Hausa    |
| 3    | Lokaci              | Hausa    | 23   | Taba       | Hausa    |
| 4    | Sai                 | Hausa    | 24   | Taba       | Hausa    |
| 5    | Sam                 | Hausa    | 25   | Amma       | Hausa    |
| 6    | Permanent Secretary | English  | 26   | Anyway     | English  |
| 7    | Ko                  | Hausa    | 27   | Dictionary | English  |
| 8    | Amma                | Hausa    | 28   | Amma       | Hausa    |
| 9    | Interest            | English  | 29   | Akwai      | Hausa    |
| 10   | Hankale             | Hausa    | 30   | Kabila     | Hausa    |
| 11   | Yadda               | Hausa    | 31   | Ko         | Hausa    |
| 12   | Tadi                | Hausa    | 32   | Amma       | Hausa    |
| 13   | Roundabout          | English  | 33   | Ko         | Hausa    |
| 14   | Amma                | Hausa    | 34   | Nanyi      | Hausa    |
| 15   | Kenan               | Hausa    | 35   | So         | Hausa    |
| 16   | Daja                | Hausa    | 36   | Ko         | Hausa    |
| 17   | Daja                | Hausa    | 37   | Lokaci     | Hausa    |
| 18   | Tun                 | Hausa    | 38   | Sam        | Hausa    |
| 19   | Tun                 | Hausa    | 39   | Amma       | Hausa    |
| 20   | Tun                 | Hausa    | 40   | Interest   | English  |

| S/No | Words      | Language | S/No | Words      | Language |
|------|------------|----------|------|------------|----------|
| 41   | Sai        | Hausa    | 46   | Banda      | Hausa    |
| 42   | Roundabout | English  | 47   | Dictionary | English  |
| 43   | Dole       | Hausa    | 48   | Anyway     | English  |
| 44   | Kamin      | Hausa    | 49   | So         | Hausa    |
| 45   | Ko         | Hausa    | 50   | Kabilato   | hausa    |

Speaker 4

| S/No | Words            | Language | S/No | Words                  | Language |
|------|------------------|----------|------|------------------------|----------|
| 1    | Makaranta        | Hausa    | 7    | Kam                    | Hausa    |
| 2    | Secondary School | English  | 8    | Committee              | English  |
| 3    | Secondary School | English  | 9    | Polytechnic            | English  |
| 4    | Village Level    | English  | 10   | College of Agriculture | English  |
| 5    | Committee        | English  | 11   | Village Level          | English  |
| 6    | Succeeding       | English  | 12   | Ba                     | Hausa    |

Speaker 5

| S/No | Words | Language | S/No | Words   | Language |
|------|-------|----------|------|---------|----------|
| 1    | Ashe  | Hausa    | 7    | Ko      | Hausa    |
| 2    | Kam   | Hausa    | 8    | Minti   | English  |
| 3    | Banda | Hausa    | 9    | Haukalo | Hausa    |
| 4    | Amma  | Hausa    | 10   | Fara    | Hausa    |
| 5    | Nufi  | Hausa    | 11   | Minti   | English  |
| 6    | Fara  | hausa    |      |         |          |

# 17. Language & the Teaching of HIV/AIDS Life Coping Skills in Schools

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The need for HIV/AIDS preventive education along several fronts has been widely received by the public. Education has been identified as a key to bringing about changes in the attitudes and behaviours of people, both children and adults, towards the campaign against this dreadful sickness. This is because education has been identified as an essential means of changing the behaviour of children and adults by providing positive health reinforcement orientation. The primary goal of HIV/AIDS education at the secondary school is to ensure that the students remain uninfected while in school. This is possible if they acquire appropriate behaviour patterns and communication skills that will keep them away from being infected. This paper discusses the importance of language as a key weapon in teaching HIV/AIDS life coping skills education. Specifically, the paper begins with a brief history of HIV/AIDS, defines the nature and feature of HIV/AIDS, discusses the role of education in HIV/AIDS prevention, explains the need for life coping skills training and proposes the integration of HIV/AIDS life coping skills into secondary schools curriculum in Nigeria.

## **Introduction**

Effective implementation and response to HIV/AIDS preventive education should be organized along several fronts of the education sector. The primary goal of education is to change behavior. Schenkar and Nyirenda. (2002:6) observed that schools are key settings for educating children about HIV/AIDS and for halting the further spread of the HIV infection. Success in carrying out this function however depends upon using education to reach in time children and young adults who are considered by Vilakazi (2002:6) to be “the window of hope” in the society. This group needs positive health reinforcement behaviour that would change the orientation that places them at risk.

HIV/AIDS was first reported in 1981 in the USA that is basically two decades ago and has since then become the most devastating pandemic not only in Nigeria but in the whole world. Nigeria has a projected population of about 125 million people (CBN statistics). Of this population, the youths of the age bracket of 15-49 years are about 40% of the population (Adara 2002:2). This age bracket of 15-49 years which is termed the vulnerable age group according to Adara (2002:63) is the most devastated by HIV/AIDS pandemic.



In Nigeria, the first case of HIV/AIDS was reported in 1986. Since then, the epidemic has rapidly spread to every community in the country and reaching exponential levels with a national HIV prevalence rate of 5.8% according to Lambo (2003:iii). This figure translates to about 3.5 million people living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria. Through the National Sentinel Surveillance, Nigeria has been able to track the progression on HIV epidemic from 1.8% in 1991 to 3.8% in 1993 to 4.5% in 1995, to 5.4% in 1999 and the current 5.8 in 2001 (Lambo 2003:iii).

The above figures are alarming and only a well directed and co-ordinated response of all sectors especially education, will prevent an uncontrolled spread of the epidemic in Nigeria. It is worthy of note that HIV/AIDS is a multi sectoral problem and that Nigeria through National Action Committee on HIV/AIDS-NACA and all other agencies co-coordinating on HIV/AIDS as well as Non Governmental Organizations NGOs and donor agencies have put up a strong fight and strong commitment to the HIV/AIDS intervention.

Despite the high level sensitization, orientation, awareness etc it is worthy to note from the above that the spread of the infection has not abetted. These efforts so far have not been seen to yield the expected positive result, which is a significant decrease in the rates of infection. There is therefore the need to consider successful implementation of preventive education in line with the adage which says "prevention is better than cure".

### **Brief History of HIV/AIDS**

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, what came to be known as AIDS made its first sporadic appearances in several countries. In the subsequent two decades, the epidemic spread rapidly, leading to an estimated 33.6million individuals being HIV- infected by the end of 1999. At that time, it was estimated that AIDS was killing more people worldwide than any other infectious disease, while Africa alone experienced almost as many AIDS-related deaths in the last two decades of the twentieth century as Europe experienced during the period of the bubonic plague in the fourteenth century.

The epidemic came early to certain parts of the world and late to others. It started in the late 1970s or early 1980s in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. In North Africa and the Middle East, in East, South and South-East Asia, and in the Pacific, it began in the late 1980s, while its onset in Eastern Europe and Central Asia was delayed until the early 1990s. The epidemic has taken different forms in these different parts of the world.

In Nigeria, AIDS was first diagnosed in a commercial sex worker (CSW). Since then HIV incidence has become progressive, as shown in the statistics of 1.8% in 1993, 4.5% in 1996, 5.4% in 1999, 5.8% in 2001 and 5.3% in 2004. From the following statistics, we will agree that HIV/AIDS has reached an exponential rate. This means that figures will from now on be multiplying themselves. It has consequently crossed the critical threshold where an explosive spread is to be expected. Particularly unfortunate is the findings of national zero prevalence studies (NASCP- National AIDS/STDs Control Programme-1999) which reveals the preponderance of HIV infection among the 15-24 years age group constituting

about 40% of the population that is the bulk of our students and the nations' workforce (Adara 2002:6).

In many countries, especially those where the prevalence is highest, HIV is transmitted largely through high- risk sexual activity and is generalized among men and women throughout the population. In others, it tends to be concentrated in certain sub-populations, such as individuals who inject illicit drugs, sex-workers and their clients, and men who have sex with men. Potential exists for this concentration to be diluted with the virus being spread more generally in a population. This has happened in North East India where the virus has spread rapidly among networks of male drug injectors and from the men to their wives.

UNAIDS notes that an HIV epidemic may take off in the general population of a country where there is a considerable amount of sexual mixing among adults: to sustain a heterosexual epidemic, on average each infected person must have unprotected sex with a minimum of two partners, becoming infected by one and passing on the infection to at least one other. Since not every encounter between an HIV-positive and an HIV-negative partner will result in a new infection, a sustained heterosexual epidemic suggests that a substantial proportion of the population, both male and female, have a number of sex partners over their lifetime (UNAIDS 1999c, p.6).

The table below is a breakdown of the HIV/AIDS situation in the world and goes along way to buttress the exponential level of the pandemic.

Table 2.1: Regional HIV/AIDS statistics and features, December 1999

| Region                        | Adults & Children living with HIV/AIDS | Adult prevalence rate % | Main mode(s) of transmission |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Sub-Saharan Africa            | 23.3 million                           | 8.0                     | Heterosexual                 |
| Caribbean                     | 360,000                                | 1.96                    | Heterosexual, MSM            |
| South & South-East Asia       | 6 million                              | 0.69                    | Heterosexual                 |
| Latin America                 | 1.3 million                            | 0.57                    | MSM, IDU, Heterosexual       |
| North America                 | 920,000                                | 0.56                    | MSM, IDU, Heterosexual       |
| Western Europe                | 520,000                                | 0.25                    | MSM, IDU                     |
| Eastern Europe & Central Asia | 360,000                                | 0.14                    | IDU, MSM                     |
| North Africa and Middle East  | 220,000                                | 0.13                    | IDU, Heterosexual            |
| Australia and New Zealand     | 12,000                                 | 0.1                     | MSM, IDU                     |
| East Asia and Pacific         | 530,000<br>33.6million                 | 0.068<br>1.1            | IDU, Heterosexual, MSM       |

MSM= sexual transmission among men who have sex with men IDU= transmission through injecting drug use.

Source: *UNAIDS*, 1999c p. 5.

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**Definition, Nature and Features of HIV/AIDS**

HIV is a virus, the human immune-deficiency virus, which weakens the body's ability to fight off infections such as tuberculosis. The virus is spread when body fluids (blood, semen) from an infected person enter the body of an uninfected person. This occurs in three principal ways: through unprotected sexual contact with an infected person, through the transfusion of contaminated blood, and through the shared use of sharp instruments that may carry contaminated blood (as can happen with the sharing of razor blades or the sharing of needles among injecting drug users). The virus can also be transmitted from an infected woman to her child during pregnancy, at the time of childbirth, or through breastfeeding (mother-to-child transmission, MTCT).

HIV belongs to the class of slow viruses, which manifest two features- slow progression and steady transmissibility. The deterioration of the human immune system in a person infected with HIV is long and slow. For several years the infected person may show no symptoms of being diseased, but may continue to look healthy and feel well. But all the while, the virus remains active within the organ systems of the body. This viral activity leads to a progressive weakening and ultimate breakdown in the body's defense system (Figure 2.1). Throughout this lengthy period of progressive deterioration (and subsequently), the virus can be transmitted through body fluids from the infected person to others. From the time of first infection, the infected person, though showing no symptoms, can transmit the HIV virus to others.

When the deterioration of the immune system reaches a certain degree, the person begins to experience, with increasing frequency, periodic bouts of illnesses and infections which an uninfected body would normally be able to ward off or cope with.

As a result of HIV infection, the individual lacks a viable immune response to these further infections. Because these infections use the opportunity provided by the body's weakened defense system to establish themselves, they are referred to as opportunistic infections. An individual who experiences the level of immune-deficiency at which these opportunistic infections occur is said to have AIDS, the acquired immune-deficiency syndrome. Thus, AIDS is caused by HIV and works in lethal conjunction with the opportunistic infections. As well as making the body susceptible to a variety of infections, the weakened immune system reduces to such an extent the potential of the body to recover from these infections becomes difficult. In a majority of cases, the person becomes steadily weaker and eventually dies. Most HIV/AIDS patient will die within eight to ten years from the time when they became infected, and many will die even sooner. In the absence of treatment, the period between the manifestation of what is called AIDS and death seldom lasts longer than two years.

Individuals who have an established HIV infection are infected for life. There is no known way of reversing the HIV status of such an individual. The opportunistic infections can be treated relatively simply at moderate cost, thereby improving the clinical status of the AIDS patient. Potent, but currently very costly, treatment, through highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) can suppress viral activity in the body and thereby prolong the time that an HIV/AIDS patient can survive relatively symptom free. The virus, however, is not eliminated but only suppressed. A highly resistant reservoir, which establishes itself in the

system very early in the course of infection, remains. Upon cessation of therapy, this explodes once more into activity. In other words, the antiretroviral drugs do not bring a complete cure. The absence of a complete cure is matched by the absence of a vaccine. None exists, and it could take several years before a vaccine becomes available for universal and affordable application.

In the absence of a complete cure, of affordable and manageable treatment, and of a vaccine, an uninfected person can avoid HIV infection and AIDS in only one way, by not sharing the body fluids of an infected individual. This can be done by avoiding activities that lead to such sharing, such as penetrative sex or the sharing of needles and sharp instruments. It can also be done by the use of barriers such as condoms or gloves which obstruct the sharing of body fluids. Hence, the only ways currently known for preventing sexually transmitted HIV infection are: engaging in sexual intercourse only with individuals known to be HIV- free, abstinence, and condom use. All three necessitate a substantial change in outlook and behaviour. All three have implications for education.

The majority of AIDS cases are found in adults between the ages of 20 and 50. Differences are usually noted between women and men, with the peak ages for AIDS cases being 20-29 for women and 30-39 for men. This means that AIDS strikes hardest at those who are in their most productive years. It wipes out the promise of years of education and training. It deprives families, communities and societies of experienced, skilled and active members. Because it reaches a peak in the age groups who are raising young children, it hits hard at families, leaving children orphaned and without support. (Michael, 2000:20).

A significant number of AIDS cases also occur among children below the age of five. Almost all of these children will have received the infection from their mothers through the MTCT mechanisms, though some may have received it through sexual abuse or through contaminated blood. Almost all of these children die very young, but a small number may survive until they are of school-going age. Though found in children of primary school age, AIDS cases are comparatively rare in children in the 5-14 age groups. This age group is referred to as the 'window of hope'. They are the young people who are least likely to be HIV-infected. If they remain so, they constitute a hope that the future will be less ravaged than the present by the AIDS epidemic. (Kelly, 2000:20).

The developmental stages of children in primary school, combined with their virtual AIDS-free status, imposes on schools the twofold responsibility of enabling them to remain uninfected while at school and of promoting the adoption by them of behaviour patterns that will keep them uninfected throughout life.

### **The Role of Education**

The primary role of education is to change behaviour. Schools according to Schenkar and Nyirenda, (2002:6) are key settings for educating children about HIV/AIDS and for halting the further spread of HIV infection. Success in carrying out this function depends upon reaching children and young adults in time to reinforce positive health behaviours and alter the behaviour that place young people at risk. Children of school age and adolescents between the ages of 5-18 have excellent resources of being delivered effective education by schools. Skilled teachers and an interactive educational process that occurs over time with a variety of learning opportunities, materials and the ability to involve parents in

their children's learning are some of the roles of education. Other roles of education as listed by Schenkar et al (2002) are:

### **Reducing HIV Transmission by Behaviour Change**

When the spectre of AIDS first began to loom large in the 1980s and early 1990s, attention focused mostly on how further spread of the disease could be prevented. HIV-control programmes were directed to reducing infection along the principal transmission routes- needle sharing among infected drug users and unprotected penetrative sex. Later, when the facts about mother-to-child transmissibility became better known, control programmes also targeted the possibility of HIV transmission from an infected mother to her child when breastfeeding. In all cases the objective was to bring about such change in behaviour as would render transmission of HIV less likely. Programmes directed at injecting drug users encouraged clients to use only clean needles, which were made readily accessible in the majority of countries. In the case of mother-to-child transmission, there was need to weigh the benefits of breastfeeding for child health against the possibility of HIV transmission and, on this basis, to make choices about replacement infant-feeding methods. But since three quarters of HIV transmission worldwide is through sex, the majority of behaviour-change programmes have been directed towards providing individuals with the knowledge and skills that would enable them to avoid sexual behaviour that would put them at risk of HIV infection. All three programme types are educational in nature, though the tendency when considering educational interventions for children and adolescents is to focus almost exclusively on those that relate to sexual knowledge and practices.

### **Education Programme for Reducing Sexually Transmitted HIV**

Educational programmes for in-school and out-of-school young people are seen as providing readily available channels for consciously influencing students through the curriculum and the values that the curriculum seeks to embody. Sexual health and HIV/AIDS programmes were developed for both formal and non-formal sub-sectors. The objective was that through relevant educational content, presented in a suitable way, students would be helped to develop personally held value systems which would empower them to make correct and safe choices that would reduce the likelihood of their contracting HIV. This was to be achieved by providing information and inculcating skills that would help self-protection, promoting behaviour that would strengthen young people's capacity to prevent personal disaster, enhancing capacity to draw others back from the brink, and reducing the stigma, silence, shame, and discrimination so often associated with the disease. The fundamental purpose of all educational programmes was to develop values and attitudes that say 'yes' to life and 'no' to premature, casual, unprotected or socially unacceptable sex and sexual experimentation.

The importance of this approach was reaffirmed by UNAIDS in its 1999 World AIDS campaign with children and young people.

"Policies on integrating quality life skills, sexual health, and HIV/AIDS education into school curricula, starting at primary school and continuing throughout a student's education, must be developed by Ministries of Education, in collaboration with parent-teacher associations and with the participation of students representatives.... In addition it is critical that children and young people



who do not attend school are also given access to life skills, sexual health and HIV/AIDS training (UNAIDS 1999a, p. 17)".

The following reasons justify the focus on children and young people:

1. They are very numerous- the combined primary and secondary school enrolments accounted for about 18 percent of the world's population in 1995, while sub-Saharan Africa's school-age population of more than 230 million accounted for over 30 percent of its people.
2. They are very vulnerable to HIV/AIDS - UNAIDS estimates that in 1999 alone, 570,000 children under the age of 15 became infected, while by the end of that year one-third of the 33 million people in the world living with HIV were young people aged 15 -24.
3. They are crying out for help as they suffer from the experience of HIV/AIDS, some in their own persons, many in their families and among their friends, many as orphans.
4. They are young, idealistic, optimistic, and hopeful. They want to make a world for themselves and they want that world to be a better place than that which they have inherited from their predecessors. This was forcibly expressed by a delegation of young people to the 1993 International conference on STD/AIDS in Africa: "We strongly believe that our energy, idealism and commitment can be used to stop the further spread of the AIDS epidemic that is devastating the social and economic fabric of our own countries" (UNAIDS, 1999b, p.4).
5. They are at a period of sexual awakening, learning and experimentation, and need extensive help and support in making constructive use of their new-found powers.
6. Most important, they are the window of hope for the future-even though some may already be HIV-infected, the overwhelming majority is not. The general picture is that in heavily infected countries, the individuals most likely to be HIV free are those in the 5-14 years age group, that is, those who should normally be in primary school. This is where hope for the future really lies. The challenge that formal and non-formal educational provision faces is to work with these disease-free children to enable them to remain so.

The school and broader education systems have adopted various strategies for promoting HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention among young people. The central principle of these interventions is that they should help the participants to behave in ways that would prevent them from HIV infection. Examples of the programmes and activities adopted include:

- Integrating life skills and HIV/AIDS prevention into school curricula: integrating sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention into curricula for existing non-formal education programmes;
- Developing new organizational structures and programmes for the promotion of HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention;
- Providing a wide variety of peer education and/or peer counseling programmes designed to contribute to HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support. Peer education typically involves members of a given group



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striving to effect change in other members of the same group. It has been used successfully in both school (as in the 'Expanded life planning education project' in Oyo State, Nigeria)(Michael 2000) and non-school settings (as in the 'Behaviour change- an education for life process' in Uganda and Zambia);

- Diffusion of local responses and solutions to the HIV/AIDS crisis and its impacts, as in the 'School without walls' approach used in the Southern Africa AIUDS Training Programme;
- Promoting the involvement of school students in HIV/AIDS education, both within the classroom and through co-curricular activities. These activities, which are allied to pair education, encourage young people and children to share the information they already possess. This can be effected through such mechanisms as anti-AIDS clubs (Zambia), essay competitions within and between schools (Thailand), participatory dance and drama (Uganda);
- Using one or more entertainment and information media (drama, comedy, community theatre, TV, radio, newspapers, songs, puppets) to convey messages about HIV/AIDS and to develop attitudes and practices that promote the protection of self and others (as in the 'edutainment' model used by Soul City, South Africa).

Where these approaches have been evaluated, the findings have not been altogether clear. Problems arise from the multiplicity of interventions and initiatives, the absence of shared knowledge and co-ordination, and the focus on attitudes, beliefs, or HIV/AIDS knowledge as the measure of successful programme impact (whereas the critical measure is the effect the programme might have on HIV incidence). The situation is almost as if, not being quite sure what to do, individuals, organizations and agencies feel that doing something would be better than doing nothing. The major and almost universal difficulty lies in determining the critical elements of a prevention strategy that will reduce HIV infection.

### **The Role of Education in HIV Prevention**

At a minimum, this requires attention to curriculum content and delivery strategies. Curriculum content should include:

- Reproductive health and sexual education;
- HIV/AIDS in the community;
- Psycho-social life skills;
- Human rights, relationships and responsibilities.

Strategies should be concerned with:

- Integrating reproductive health and sexual education into the curriculum from the time children start school;
- Greater reliance on education by peers from within and outside the school;
- Capitalizing on the resources inherent in persons living with HIV/AIDS;

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- Greater involvement of communities, CBOs, NGOs, churches, and voluntary organizations;
  - Comprehensive re-orientation and re-training of teachers and teacher educators;
  - Establishing linkages with critical support services, especially in health areas.

*Life Coping Skills or life skills Education:* These are special skills or competencies for the purpose of self-development, self-management and life survival which an individual will require to enable him/her deal with specific life situations. Vilakazi (2001:16) gives the following definitions to Life Skills Education:

- LSE is about teaching people to be more aware of them selves and taking extra care of themselves.
- LSE is about skills acquired formally and informally by an individual to be able to sustain life.
- Enabling pupils and equipping them to be better citizens in respect of work and general life.

Providing learners with skills that will enable them to cope with the diverse challenges of life. These skills include:

*Negotiation skills:* In our interaction with people, negotiation skill is the ability to stand up for our values and beliefs when there is conflicting ideas or practices from others. UNICEF (2003:103) says “Negotiation involves an amicable agreement reached by two or more individuals to solve a problem. It is a way of meeting one’s goals without anger, guilt or intimidation. It involves discussion, listening and observation.” Friends and colleagues may come up with unacceptable or dangerous suggestions and put pressure on us to accept them. This is where our negotiation skills are useful. It is very important that young people know how to negotiate appropriately in order to avoid running into problems.

*Communication skills:* This simply means using clear, simple words and sentences that is easy to understand to express your intention. It also involves the use of body language like smiling, eye contact etc when speaking to help you communicate your intentions even more effectively. Under communication skills, we have other skills like:

- i. **Listening Skills:** This implies listening carefully to what the other person is saying. Using positive body language such as nodding to show that you understand what they have said.
- ii. **Observation Skills:** This also implies carefully observing the other persons non verbal cues while you are both speaking. These non verbal cues include positive body language to show that you understand what is being said or negative cues such as looking around at other things which could show that they are not listening.

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- iii. Critical Thinking Skills: Having listened to and observed the other persons intentions, carefully weighing up the implications of their suggestions. Then make the best decision that most reflect your interest.
  - iv. Body Language Skills: This is the use of positive body language that helps you communicate your intentions.
  - v. Problem Solving Skills: This involves the ability to quickly think out the solution to a problem.
  - vi. Peer Resistance skills: This is the ability to quickly say “NO” to your peers when you do not agree with their suggestions.

*Refusal Skills:* This is the ability to say or show that one is unwilling to give, accept or do what the other person is requesting him/her to do by saying “NO” clearly and firmly to the person advancing pressure. In refusal skills one does not compromise his or her decision. Maintaining the position of non-compromise can be achieved by not advancing reason for a position or decision. This is so, that one does not get convinced by the counter arguments the other person may present.

*Self-Assertion Skills:* This means standing up for your right without violating anyone else. It helps you to feel better about yourself, confident, in control and respected by others. Self-Assertion Skill helps one to assume responsibility of thoughts, feelings and behaviours. When exhibiting this skill, the person will have a clear, firm voice, and relaxed, good posture, UNICEF (2003:110).

*Self-Esteem Skills:* This is one’s knowledge of self which gives one a sense of value for self without which one lacks identity and has no purpose and as such becomes reactive instead of controlling situation around him/her. It is a way an individual feels about himself/herself and how he/she relates to other people. Self-esteem is pride in oneself which one is aware and accepts one’s imperfection whilst cherishing ones inherent strengths and qualities. On the other hand, it is the assessment that people make about themselves and it can be low or high. When a person can accept his/her weakness and faults and simultaneously recognizes his/her strengths and positive qualities, the person will experience strong self-worth and high self-esteem. (UNICEF 2003: 101).

### **Integrating Life Skills Education into Secondary Schools Curriculum through Language**

According to Vilakazi (2001:17), “the ministry of health and social welfare-MOHSW- formulated a well articulated policy in 1998 which acknowledged that without the integration of LSW into the curriculum at all levels, the war against HIV/AIDS will be lost”. As a result of this strong sense of purpose as captured above, some curricular materials both for the primary and secondary/high school in the country has been revived and LSE components integrated in some school subjects.

In the aspect of Language, a topic ‘Language for Life’ taught in an English Language class for secondary school students will include such concepts like self esteem, self assertion and understanding your personality and appreciating/ respecting your person as a boy or girl or as a male or female as the case may be.

LSE concepts that have been incorporated include knowing oneself, violence and conflict, looking after your health and HIV/AIDS.

From the foregoing, if Swaziland could integrate LSE into English Language curriculum in primary and secondary schools, it becomes obvious that Nigeria could borrow a leaf by not only integrating LSE in English Language but also in our numerous local languages. This is very important as the local language or vernacular are mandatory subjects for students in primary and secondary schools in FCT and Nigeria in general.

It is very possible to teach LSE at theoretical level, yet it will be more effective when used in conjunction with our local languages. This is very important since exposure to life skills education is paramount for translating the knowledge of HIV/AIDS into tangible action as change of behaviour and attitudes among young people. The home and school are best environments to teach behaviour change to young people by using English and their mother tongue and linking it to their positive cultural etiquettes which encourages abstinence and delayed sexual debut until marriage.

This is achievable bearing in mind that the primary school is characterized by the 6 to 12/13 years age group while the secondary school is characterized by +12 to 17 year's age group. This simply translates to the fact that relevant curriculum materials can be developed in line with the psychological development of the child at a certain age. With the integration of LSE into existing language curriculum, no student can miss it because it becomes mandatory. Also when teachers start addressing the issue of controlling HIV/AIDS by applying LSE or survival skills and illustrating with real life situations, the students will be more likely to believe and give it the seriousness it deserves. Integrating LSE into language courses will definitely help the young people to make the right decision and choices early in life. LSE will help and protect the young people from social problems, give them high negotiation, improve their self esteem and interpersonal skills.

### **Suggestions**

As a result of our cultural barriers and encumbrances surrounding the world "sex", some teachers still find it difficult or embarrassing to discuss topics such as sexuality including reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and STDs openly with the students. To forestall this, there is need to train and retrain teachers on the concept of LSE. This then makes it imperative that the curriculum of teacher education should be flexible to address or integrate relevant educational innovations as they come.

Still on the training need, trainers of teachers need training in LSE before they can train the teacher trainees. Curriculum designers and policy makers need to be trained as well for effective co-ordination and implementation.

Successful implementation of LSE depends on effective collaboration of all stakeholders. The stakeholders in LSE should appoint a coordinating and implementing body for LSE. This body should be given the task of monitoring and evaluating all LSE activities.

There is need for networking among the various donor agencies both in education, health, environment and women affairs and youth development since LSE and HIV/AIDS are multi dimensional. This will go a long way to reduce

duplication and overlapping of activities by the organizations whose concentrations is on HIV/AIDS.

### Conclusions

All around us LSE is being advertised informally. Every day we come across ZIPUP bill boards sponsored by Society for Family Health. That is a classical example of LSE. In our electronic media we equally are exposed to this same survival skill where the negotiation skill and self-assertion skill is showcased. In essence this same message can be taken to our schools to encourage our young people that refusal is not a sign of weakness but an exhibition of strength. This is the message of LSE: The role of English Language and the indigenous Nigerian languages in HIV/AIDS prevention cannot be overemphasized.

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# 18. Processes of Integration in Group Relations: Implication for Language Planning in Nigeria and National Unity

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This paper sets out to (1) critically assess the rationale for the provisions of the NPE for language in education in the primary schools; (2) identify relevant theoretical groundwork for ethnic relations and integration; and (3) earmark possible action points in language planning which can involve the relevant theories of ethnic relations to attain national unity. Based on an eclectic interpretation of various theoretical propositions the paper assesses the rationale of the *National Policy on Education* and illustrates the applicability of the language component of the NPE on Ikwerre – a minority ethnolinguistic group within the Nigerian nation state. The derivative from the illustrative exercise is that this minority language is at a critical stage of extinction. Recommendations were made on points of action for the government, and through the government to State language planning centre; and points of action also for the ethnolinguistic members.

## **Introduction**

The *National Policy on Education* (2004) (henceforth NPE) affirms the importance of language by stating the overall position of government that language is unarguably a means of promoting social interaction and national cohesion, as well as for preserving cultures. These lofty targets have informed the disposition of government towards indigenous languages as stated in the NPE that:

- i. Every child shall learn the language of the immediate environment (where the LIE is more often an indigenous language than pidgin)
- ii. In the interest of national unity every child shall learn one of the three Nigerian languages: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba (henceforth HIY).

The confusion encouraged by (i) and (ii) above has been widely articulated by various writers. Jibril (1990:116) celebrates the HIY inflicted on the country believing that “small unviable languages are disappearing, their speakers being submerged by larger linguistic groups”. His later view (Jibril, 2005) is better

amended to a wholistic appreciation of the global problem. At the level of Nigeria, English is displacing the indigenous languages irrespective of minority or majority language groups. At the level of the international community, the concept of globalization with one of its instruments as the internet, being English-mediated, is advancing the unipolar World of American hegemony “admirably”. Given the foregoing, bilingualism or even trilingualism being fronted by the NPE is suspicious especially that many students of language studies accept that bilingualism is only a stage in a transition towards language shift or language death.

The hopelessness emerging against the so called lofty ideals is cause for further studies of the rationale for the confused principles of the NPE. The purpose of the paper, therefore, is to: (1) critically assess the rationale for the provisions of the NPE for language in education in the primary schools; (2) identify relevant theoretical groundwork for ethnic relations and integration; (3) earmark possible action points in language planning which can involve the relevant theories of ethnic relations to attain national unity.

The problem addressed in this paper is how the provisions of the NPE for language in education can encourage adequate ethnic relations; and how language planning can explore the purposes of healthy ethnic relations for attaining national unity.

### **Processes of Integration in Group Relations**

Researchers in bilingual education and ethnic relations are of the view that the success of bilingual programmes is predicated on the form and quality of ethnic contact. Paulston (1992) observes that in the United States, nationals of diverse origins have shifted to English as mother tongue in a matter of generations, whereas in Quebec and Sweden language shift is far in sight. Liberton, Dalton and Johnston (1975) suggest that to explain the differing trends, it would be useful to develop a theory to explain the different situations resulting from different ethnic contact, bearing in mind that where the subordinate group is indigenous, the instance of ethnic relations will be different from where the migrant populations are subordinate. They theorized four groups of differing ethnic disposition.

- |                              |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| (1) Indigenous superordinate | (2) Migrant superordinate |
| (3) Indigenous subordinate   | (4) Migrant subordinate   |

They believe that mother-tongue shift is likely to occur among the first two groups.

Schermerhorn (1970) proposed the theory of inductive Typology of Comparative Ethnic Relations to explain the consequences of bilingual education in North America as a direct result of ethnic groups in contact. The premise to his typology is his statement:

The probability is overwhelming that when two groups with different cultural histories establish contacts that are regular rather than occasional

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or intermittent, one of two groups will typically assume dominance over the other.

Schermerhorn (1970:68)

He adds (Schermerhorn, 1972) that the nature of this dominance determines the major factor in ethnic relations.

In an outline of the central issues in research in ethnic relations and language options Liberton, Dalton and Johnston (1973) make the following proposition.

When the territory of a contemporary nation-state is occupied by peoples of diverse cultures and origins, the integration of such plural groups into each envioning society will depend on three independent and three intervening variables. The **independent variables** are:

- a) repeatable sequences of interaction between subordinate ethnics and dominant groups, such as annexation, migration, and colonization;
- b) The degree of enclosure (i.e. institutional separation or segmentation of the subordinate group or groups from the society-wide network of institutions and associations);
- c) The degree of control exercised by dominant groups over access to scarce resources by subordinate groups in a given society.

The **intervening** or **contextual variables** that modify the effects of independent variables are:

- a) Agreement or disagreement between dominant and subordinate groups on collective goals for the latter, such as assimilation, pluralism;
- b) Membership of a society under scrutiny in a class or category of societies sharing overall common cultural and structural features, such as Near-East Societies;
- c) Membership of a society under scrutiny in a more limited category of societies distinguished by forms of institutional dominance, that is, polity dominating economy or vice versa.

Schermerhorn (1970) formulated a paradigm by which we can determine the social contexts that can serve as intervening variables so that the conditions under which language shifts can take place are clearly identifiable. Precisely, it is an answer to the problem of how to deal with the agreement or disagreement between dominant and subordinate groups on collective goals set up for the latter, such as assimilation and pluralism. He called the policies **assimilationist, pluralist, secessionist, and militant**.

The function or purpose of the assimilationist policy is to make the minority members to abandon their cultural distinctiveness, adopt the values and style of life of the superordinates and thereby merge with them as a measure of merging with the wider society.

The pluralist strategy seeks that the dominant group may tolerate the subordinates, allowing them to retain much of their cultural distinctiveness.

The secessionist minority's aim is to separate or detach from the superordinates in order to pursue an independent existence.

The militant group aspires to overcome and gain control over the dominants who currently have ascendancy in society.

Assimilation and pluralism really refer to cultural aspects, while secession and militancy refer to structural indices. Following Keesing (1974) we distinguish *culture* from *social structure*. Culture points to the behaviour a people learned through socialization, and through norms and values that serve as guides or standards for such behaviour. Social structure, on the other hand, refers to obvious social relationships which members of a society have with each other and which place them in groups, large or small, permanent or temporary, formally organized or unorganized, and which relates them to the major institutional activities and occupational life, religion, marriage and the family, education, government, and recreation. Social structure is evident in the quality of interaction and relationships found in institutions such as political parties, judicial system, government ministries and parastatals, national and multinational companies, universities and polytechnics, church and Christendom, marriage and family life; and in people's predisposition to act and interact with others. This predisposition is determined by their received norms and values.

In Nigeria ethnic norms and values may be said to be greatly influential in the character of individuals. Furthermore, it will appear that the target of the NPE is assimilationist or pluralist rather than secessionist or militant. In this wise we are accepting a more constructive view of the NPE. Contrariwise, it might be said that the NPE is unwittingly secessionist or militant. Without going into statistical justification let us assume that the popular Niger Delta question is one of marginalization, and let us assume that Ikwerre is our case study.

1. To what extent is Ikwerre occupationally disadvantaged?
2. To what extent is Ikwerre disadvantaged given the lively religious activity which has inundated the Ikwerre (Port Harcourt) environment, and given that this Christian enthusiasm is conducted in languages other than Ikwerre?
3. With the attraction of other peoples into the Ikwerre environment due to opportunities of employment, trade and commerce, inter-marriages are well expected. To what extent is the family culture influenced?
4. The Ikwerre (and Rivers State) is conclusively a national case of educationally disadvantaged. The preference given to the HIY in mother-tongue policies is a case in point.
5. In politics and government, in recent times, the Niger Delta has been advertising marginalization in the media – bill boards, radio, television and the newspaper – that the presidential office come the general elections of 2007 is the turn of the Niger Delta (or the South-South) area.

6. In recreation, there is fear expressed that athletes and other sports men and women are chosen on representational basis with a tilt in favour of the HIY in Nigeria.

Overall, can we be justified to say that the militancy expressed in the Niger Delta region is proof of disenchantment informed by the various measures of lopsidedness of which the language policy is one? So, there are cultural features (ethnic norms and values) that coalesce with social features (occupation, religion, marriage etc).

To deal with the difficulty of applying cultural features to conditions that involve social features, Schermerhorn (1970) suggests the concepts of **centripetal** and **centrifugal** trends in social life.

**Centripetal tendencies** are termed *assimilation* if they refer to cultural trends such as acceptance of common values, styles of life etcetera, or *incorporation* if they are structural features like increased participation in a common set of groups, associations, and institutions. Paulston (1992) cites the case of the United States where subordinate groups do not want to abandon their cultural distinctiveness but wish for access to goods and services, the institutional privileges held by the English speaking middle class. This is a case of economic incorporation rather than assimilation.

Centrifugal tendencies are dispersal. They foster separation of the subordinate groups from the dominant group or from bonds of society. In their cultural life the subordinate group expresses centrifugal tendencies in their retention and preservation of their distinctive traditions in spheres like language, religion, recreation, etc, together with their particularistic values associated with them. This may be termed cultural pluralism. In order to protect these values, the subordinate groups seek structural requirements and demand for endogamy, separate associations, and at times even restricted range of occupations.

The crux of the matter is that integration, whether centripetal or centrifugal, to the extent that it is the satisfaction of the modal tendency of the ethnic group, depends on the consensus of view of both the dominant and the subordinate groups over the goals of the subordinate (Paulston, 1992).

In Canada, the French-speaking ethnic groups came into contact through voluntary migration. This subtype of intergroup sequences is one that requires the least coercive control. The English-speaking group later took over by force, and it is likely for this reason that we notice a certain degree of enclosure. Degree of enclosure actually refers to a social or structural pluralism which varies from maximum to minimal forms and has indicators such as endogamy and institutional duplication. The more two groups share the same social institutions like churches, mosques, schools, jobs, the less the degree of enclosure within the society. In Quebec, being that two languages are persistently maintained within one province points to the existence of structural pluralism, that is, institutional differences separate ethnic groups in terms of social participation. This structural pluralism is one of the factors necessitating the immersion programme as a result of the lack of contact between the English- and French-speaking peer groups. In a multilingual city like Tangier where there are contact situations, children become bi/trilingual



effortlessly. The lesson for Ikwerre is to increase and improve language activities to sufficiency so that bilingualism can thrive.

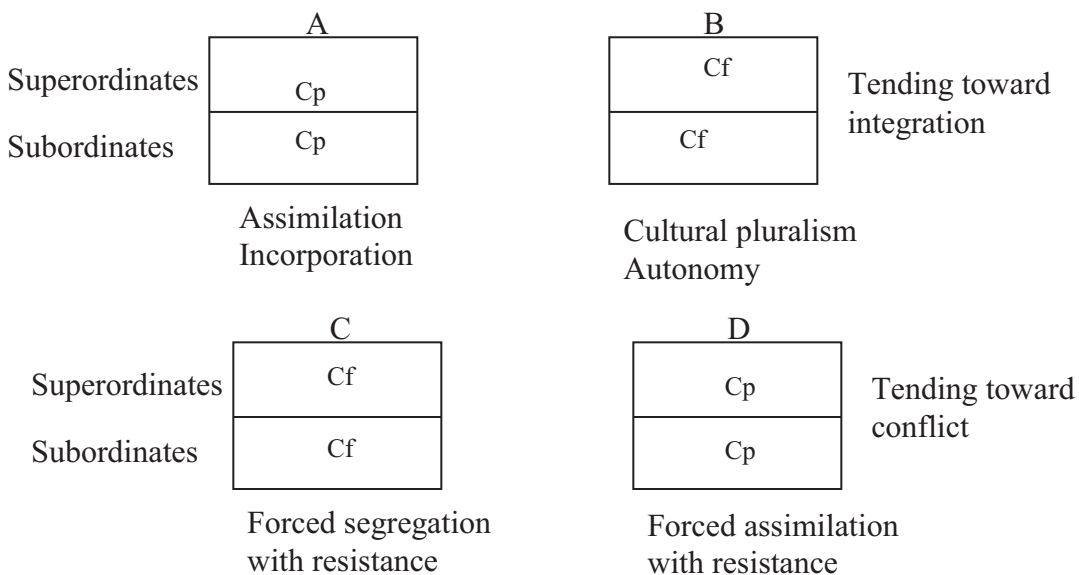
Considering the third independent variable, the degree of control by the dominant group, one observes certain interesting issues of the Canadian immersion programmes. From widespread individual bilingualism of two official languages arises the disappearance of one of the languages or a diglossic situation. By this, balanced folk bilingualism becomes really impossible. It is typically the subordinate group which becomes bilingual with language shift occurring over two or three generations. In French-speaking Canada this has been the situation until now, with a steady shift to English which is the dominant language of business and industry. In spite of the number of French speakers who shifted to English, the size of the French-speaking population remains constant. This can be explained as a function of structural pluralism – different religious institutions with different ideologies, for instance the Canadian Roman Catholic is opposed to birth control. It follows that unless there is persistence in deliberate language activities, no one can be sure that balanced folk bilingualism will not be short lived giving way to language shift of the subordinate groups.

In some societies ethnic groups that want to maintain their language, typically resort to legal measures if they have the power to enforce it, in order to protect their language. We witness in Belgium this situation where bilingual education was outlawed. It happened also in Canada. In 1967, French and English were declared the official languages of Canada. But pressure groups urged the Quebec provisional government to both preserve and strengthen the French language. The Canadian situation was polarized as follows (Swain, 1974):

1. The French-Canadians were adept at efforts to maintain their native language and culture. This was leading to French unilingualism.
2. The English-Canadians not faced by the usual fears of native language loss nor of cultural assimilation, and willfully accepting the learning of French due to possible economic and educational advantages, are increasingly being interested in acquiring bilingual status.

There was an unusual happening that the economically dominant groups are becoming bilingual, being motivated by economic concerns for the future in consequence of legal measures and pressures by the other groups in political power. In Rivers State, recently, the Assembly passed a law on mother tongue education. This is a measure to press the issue. Laws can also be passed to affect occupation and economic concerns. The spirit of such laws will be an enhancement to the implementation of the provisions of the NPE for mother tongue education.

A graphic outline of relationships to help clarify group tendencies is provided in Schermerhorn (1970). This outline based on Congruent and Incongruent orientations toward centripetal and centrifugal trends of subordinates and superordinates.

Fig. 1.1: *Outline of Ethnic Relationship*

Cp = Centripetal trends

Cf = Centrifugal trends

Source: Schermerhorn, 1970:83

### Cell A

Let us assume that the Ikwerre speakers do not enjoy equal participation in common sets of groups, associations and institutions. That is, in employment, merchandize, and churches, there is discrimination; the language of worship is foreign. Let us also assume that there is a tendency towards the acceptance of common values, lifestyle etc. The policy is assimilation. Thus, the Ikwerre experience fits in Cell A, and the mother tongue shift in favour of the superordinates. To elaborate further, the provisions of the NPE and the prevailing cultural and structural variables are paving the way to the eventual extinction of Ikwerre language.

### Cell B

Let us assume that the Ikwerre are inclined to retaining and preserving their distinctiveness in tradition in language, religion, recreation etc. together with their distinctive values associated with these. This is cultural pluralism. To succeed in this regard, the Ikwerre will have to seek structural requirements and demand endogamy, separate associations, and even restricted range of occupations. Where both the superordinates and the subordinate groups agree on a choice of cultural pluralism – that is, unity in diversity of cultural tendencies – then Cell B is the choice to be made. But this choice leaves great responsibilities to the subordinate group for realizing the targets of the bilingual programme. It seems obvious that the action options concomitant to Cell B are the imperatives for Ikwerre. They need to seek endogamy, separate associations, and restricted occupations.

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**State of the Matter**

1. Our proposition above based on the provisions of the NPE and the cojoining of cultural and structural factors placed Ikwerre in Cell A. That is, the language is critically under threat of extinction.
2. Separate research reports focusing on Ikwerre and Etche reveal that the mother tongue is not used in primary schools contrary to the recommendation contained in the NPE (Ozuru, 2005). When it was found that teachers were code mixing, involving English and mother tongue, to determine the propensity of mother tongue use, the research employing Flanders' Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) was conducted (Ozuru, 2004). This studied teacher prompts and pupil responses and revealed that the prompts for mother tongue use were rather too few and unencouraging. Afiesimama (1995) had also reported that the NPE was not implemented in Rivers State. The eventual outcome of all the foregoing is death for Ikwerre language.
3. When a territory is occupied by peoples of diverse cultures, the integration of the groups arises from a combination of certain cultural (independent) and structural (intervening) variables. When these variables are condensed into Schermerhorn's *Outline of Ethnic Relationships* it seems attractive that the Ikwerre experience might be fitted into Cell B, but this obviously is wishful thinking.
4. Mother tongue shift is more likely to occur in favour of indigenous and migrant superordinates. Given the play of the cultural and structural factors, it seems obvious again that the Ikwerre is an indigenous subordinate. This way then, it seems cogent to submit that the Ikwerre language is endangered.
5. Given that in a regular contact between two groups, one will assume dominance, the Ikwerre may not assume that dominance by the present state of affairs. Thereby, the language will die an eventual death.

**Recommendation**

1. The *Encyclopedia of American History* expresses typical multicultural policies.
  - i. recognition of dual citizenship
  - ii. government support for newspapers, television, and radio in minority languages
  - iii. support for minority festivals, holidays, and celebrations
  - iv. acceptance of traditional and religious dress in schools, the military, and society in general
  - v. support for music and arts from minority cultures
  - vi. programmes to encourage minority representation in politics, education, and the work force.

There is already a tacit admission of the above factors in the federal character principle. But that principle itself is paying lip-service to the needs of minorities.

2. Laws can be promulgated as in the case of Quebec where the French speaking Canadians have used legal means to enforce knowledge of French as requirement for job entry. This has forced about 50% of children in Montreal to enter kindergarten schools where French immersion programmes are run. Their parents' hope is that it will guarantee the children's access to scarce available jobs. This way, the French have used language as demarcation for ethnic boundaries, impelling English-speaking Canadians access to jobs via language use.
3. Where dual citizenship is to be granted, language should be made a condition for such recognition. An important social function of language is that it serves for identity. Where two or more communities compete for scarce resources, language serves them to maintain their difference and limit competing members of other communities in a bid for group survival. Where close cooperation between ethno-linguistic neighbours is in the interest of all concerned, massive bilingualism among group members may ensue. This can be described as a case of equality of the groups not in size, but in their socio-economic development such that there are no positive or negative values attached to languages. In this case, mother tongue continues to serve as a symbol of social identity and other language viewed neutrally and pragmatically as purely a means of social communication.
4. All the issues of the prevailing condition and the recommendations so far, point in the direction chiefly of a determinant political action. Such action is to seek the equalization of the ethnic groups in Nigeria. Mansour (1993) believes that greater concern for the future of Nigeria should have encouraged emerging leaderships to opt for greater autonomy of the ethnic groups with a confederate system. This satisfies the sense of cultural pluralism in Schermerhorn's outline – or in Nigeria's parlance "unity in diversity".
5. In the meantime, the limited autonomy inherent in the creation of states can be employed to some advantage if the people have the will and commitment. As evidenced by the Rivers State mother tongue law, there is much room for other laws to strengthen the survival of the cultures and languages of the state.
6. Elsewhere (Ozuru, 2004; Ozuru, 2005) we have offered some suggestions that border on the government and the citizens. A language planning centre, for instance, in Rivers State is indispensable. Along with it, should be created subordinate language committees in the various languages in the state.
7. Individuals should change their cultural orientation and embrace the language better. Great love of the language and for all users of the language irrespective of national origin should be accepted in the people's life. Folk tradition is depreciated in Ikwerre. Folk songs are almost all dead in Ikwerre. In times of baby birth, baby nursing, outing ceremonies, domestic chores and occupational activity, the radio and electronic systems for music and Christian choruses have taken over. These songs and choruses are often in foreign languages. In the Christian churches, although there are Ikwerre

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translations of the hymnals and the bible, Ikwere speakers prefer the translations in foreign language. In this regard, no one can do greater disservice to the Ikwere people than the people themselves. The attitude of accommodation extended to foreigners should be creative rather than thoughtless. An Ikwere meets a foreigner in Ikwere land and bandies over to the foreigner's language. You thereby selfishly deny the foreigner the opportunity to learn your language. Certainly, it is not when you meet them on their own soil that they will have to learn your language. You need to teach others your language, accept them with love, treat them as one of your kind, and express universal love and brotherhood. This is the way to extend the frontiers of Ikwere at home and abroad.

### **Conclusion**

A more positive political arrangement for Nigeria is indispensable. In a confederate state, the federating units muster greater political strength for self-actualization. But in the meantime, the State Assembly, which is the legislative arm of State Government, should encourage greater impetus in the implementation of the NPE with respect to mother tongue. This can be done with necessary cultural and economic laws. These laws should encourage non-speakers through economic opportunities in the state, to speak Ikwere and other languages of Rivers State. Language planning units at the State and Local Areas are worthwhile. Groups, associations and individuals to actualize the implementation of the language planning should utilize all necessary cultural and social circles. The onus on individuals for the fate of the development of their language cannot be transferred to a language centre or a state government. In the current wave of globalization, weak and uninspiring attitudes to language development will only lead to the extinction of the vast rich cultures of minority groups and later, perhaps, of the others. The NPE is unencouraging, the government is inactive, the individual speakers whose mother tongue is Ikwere are non-chalant. The speakers of the language should not rest while the huge responsibility of the development of the language rests squarely on their shoulders. If they do, they will very soon find that the giant iroko tree that fell while they mused and mocked was after all their home to retire at dusk.

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## 19. Embellished Language: The Tool of the Poet's Message in A.N. Akwanya's *Pilgrim Foot*

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### Introduction

Unlike a carpenter who uses his chisel, plane, nails and hammer to smoothen pieces of wood and nail them together with a hammer to make furniture, or a photographer who uses his camera to snap photographs of people, or a painter who uses his paint and brush to paint portraits of people, or a mason who uses his shovel to mix sand and cement to mould blocks, or a fishermen who uses his net and hook to catch fish, or a labourer who uses his cutlass and rake for gardening, the literary artist uses words as his tool to imprint on the minds of his readers memorable impressions of whatever message he intends to send across to him. The indispensability of language is to be appreciated in the light of a renowned Nigerian linguist's statement that "In the normal course of events, literature should go hand in hand with language, for what is literature but creative use of language?" (Bamgbose, 2006:14) And to Jacques Derrida "To be a poet is to know how to leave speech. To let is speak alone, which it can only do in its written form... For the work, the writer is at once everything and nothing like God" (1978:70). Obi Maduakor concurs with this opinion when he says:

"... poetry is the art of managing language and compelling it to obey one's will. The poet bends language, fragments it, and compels it to give experience a local habitation and a name. The poet is the master of double-talk; he or she speaks in riddles and in a jigsaw puzzle. The poet perceives likeness in things that are apparently unlike. Language is compelled to heighten thought, to pin emotions down, to evoke pictures and likeness in the reader's mind, to say things in memorable expressions, and to give name to the unnamable and the unknowable (2001:3).

In *Pilgrim Foot*, A.N. Akwanya shows that he, indeed, has the mastery of the English language. He appropriates the embellished language of Nigeria's colonialists as a veritable tool for sending the message of dispossession of Africans in almost all its ramifications; therefore, he shows that literary language is compulsory in literary writing for the indication of the "nature of literature as discourse" (Widdowson, 1975:31).

He uses simple diction that brings out the clarity of his theme of dispossession. His choice of words, like the English Romantic poet, William Blake, has several Biblical allusions and symbols, which reflect his priesthood.

### **The Embellished Language of the Poet in *Pilgrim Foot***

The poet's theme of the creator's dispossession of his creature in "To the Master of the Universe" is achieved through the use of metaphor, which its use in poetry D.G. Gillham describes "as an act of camouflaging" (1979:18). He presents man's suffering in the hands of his creator through natural disasters like flood, drought, famine, plague, desertification, and tsunami which "... swallows up everything/ and in one vast surge of sea/restores sway to ancient chaos" (p. 2).

He also uses the symbolism of the cross to represent man's endless suffering in the face of the natural disasters, the incurable diseases and accidents that claim his life. And in Christendom, the cross signifies suffering, endurance and salvation.

Man's attempt at salvation is seen in his greatest achievements of civilization and science to push back the natural disasters, his striving to deaden pain and extend life by six months or one year. However, his efforts are rendered futile as the poet uses personification to give human attributes to the triumph of the natural disasters as:

*after re-writing its softcode  
with new lethal capabilities,  
and newly upgrading:  
then a desert extending its empire  
chases out man and beast  
with sand dunes and sand storms (p. 2).*

These natural disasters are personified as warriors or manor lords armed with lethal weapons to reclaim what man has taken from him in his effort at civilization as a "desert extends its empire", "earthquake lays waste human effort" and the "tsunami swallows up everything" and "restores sway to ancient chaos."

Besides, the rendering null of man's effort at scientific discoveries and breakthroughs in the treatment of diseases is personified as "death's relentless career/were sent back to the starting-line/like an aborted hundred metre sprint" (p. 3).

The futility of man's effort at civilization and scientific innovations aimed at improving the quality of his life in the face of stiff opposition from his creator, who metes suffering and hardship on him by the use of natural disasters, diseases and accidents is reinforced by the powerful imagery in the word "aborted". The master of the universe will always win the battle as the natural disasters must restore sway to ancient chaos and death's relentless career on its victim is unstoppable.

In the word "aborted", the mental impression of the finality of the futility of man's effort at reversing the order of things set by his creator is laid to rest. Therefore, the creator's dispossession of man through natural disasters, diseases and accidents is endless.

Furthermore, the word “Mother” in ‘Spray from her Moist Hair’ is a universal symbol of love, care and tenderness, but here the poet uses it as a private symbol for Mother Nature. This private symbol does not have love, care and tenderness for man whom she dispossesses of land. For he has

*... nothing to inherit,  
except perhaps a little patch  
here and there  
to crop corn or yam  
and kill one another over* (p. 21).

Also Nature, which is referred to timidly as “Mother” has equipped her older offspring she favours with power “to marshal wind, /rain, /ocean/, and wield mountains/like missiles:/”... (p. 21). So apart from the shake of her moist hair which turns the earth into a roaring waterfall for eight days, she has also given the favoured offspring the power to use storm, deluge, hurricane and volcanic eruptions to dispossess man of the little patch of land he has like the creator empowers natural disasters to reclaim their possession and restore “sway to ancient chaos”. Akwanya uses simile for the indirect comparison of the offspring’s power with a missile to underscore the devastation and violence unleashed on man.

He continues with the fearsome devastation in his use of personification in “if the mountain that plucked off its socket”... (p. 22). This giving of human attribute of “plucking off” to nonhuman, “mountain”, is calculated to show that the devastation is intentionally and capriciously done to dispossess man.

Again, there is the imagery of fear, terror and impediment created in the use of the words “wind” “rain”, “ocean”, “mountains” and “nightmare”, as well as the picture of violence, mayhem and warfare created by the words “missiles” and “weapon”. These mental impressions are aptly used to underscore Mother Nature’s and her older offspring’s mischievous dispossession of man, which is the message in the poem.

There is irony in the poem where she equips the big boys with lethal, mighty weapons which they use at will to deal with man; yet they do not need them for self-defense as they never kill “any of their race”. This irony pinpoints man’s helplessness under their assault. It may also mean that it is only man that preys on and destroys other men.

He employs onomatopoeia in the poem. The use of this poetic device is obligatory as Plato asserts: “For I suppose you know what a poor appearance the work of poets present, when they have been stripped of their musical colouring, and are rehearsed in their proper nakedness. Doubtless you have observed the fact” (1997:230). Akwanya employs the onomatopoeic words, “plucked”, “crashed”, and “roaring” to enhance the rhythmic effect of the poem and also to underscore the violent dispossession of man.

Moreover, in ‘Dedication’, the poet makes abundant use of Biblical allusions to show the extent of the father’s dispossession of himself by choice through the sacrifice of his first son. His faith in the Lord as a devout Christian

can be deciphered and compared to Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, to the Lord. The magnitude of his zeal to fulfill his vow to the Lord that "He would give a son of his to serve/In the church; even more pleasing/Was the thought to give up the first" is an allusion to Hannah's fulfillment of her vow to the Lord that if he would make her fruitful, the first son from her womb would be dedicated to the temple to serve him. And this vow is seen in the 1<sup>st</sup> Book of Samuel, Chapter 1, Verse 11 where it is recorded that she vowed to the Lord and said:

*O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed  
look on the affliction of thy maidservant,  
but wilt give to thy maidservant a son,  
then, I will give him to the Lord all the days of  
his life and no razor shall touch his head.*

There is also allusion to Psalm 84 in the melodious song of the sacrificed lads: "How lovely is your dwelling place/ Lord God of hosts" (p. 6). This also echoes William Blake's 'Holy Thursday' in the *Songs of Innocence*. The great English Romantic poet called the charity wards of the exploiting church "flowers of London" and "multitudes of lambs", who

*Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the voice of song  
Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of heaven among  
(Kermode, 1973:22)*

The effect of this song in the father's sacrifice of the lyrical persona cannot be underestimated; the melodious song enchants the "young mind's sensitive core" and "its cadence washed down over me". Unfortunately,

*It was years, of course, before I made out  
What the words said; by then I'd seen  
How high and closing the circling wall (p. 7).*

Ironically, as the sacrificed lad grows older in the seminary where he is dedicated to serve the Lord, he does not notice the melodious songs again but how "High and close the circling wall". This may refer to the compound walls of the seminary that are used to cage the seminarians or the dos and don'ts, the strict religious observances, obligations, restrictions and the numerous duties of a priest. At the end of it all, the father's personal choice to dispossess himself of what he may lean on in his old age also dispossesses the lad his own freedoms and choices.

There is the paradox in the rhetorical question:

*Did he find peace, giving away  
What a man may lean on, as his,  
Certainly, but never could own? (p. 7)*

Certainly, the poet uses this paradox to underscore the extent of the devout Christian's sacrifice in dedicating his son to the church. Though the first son who is supposed to take care of him in his old age is still his son and bears his surname, but as a sacrificed person, it is the church that owns him now for even when he dies, he is buried in the church's burial ground and not in his father's compound. Moreover, his foremost responsibilities are to the church and his father is secondary. Unfortunately, he cannot find the answer, whether his father finds any peace in his sacrifice as he refers to his death euphemistically as "father had too close a bargain/with life, and went early" (p. 7).

And in 'A Tangle of Words', he shows there is everything in a name given to a child at christening for it marks the individual's identity and character. And to achieve this effect, he uses the simile:

*For once a word takes root  
At christening  
It grows like a climber  
And braces youth to the heart,  
Injects probing roots  
Till the wonder is dead (p. 14).*

He compares the permanence of a child's identity at birth, which sustains him at birth to a climber that attaches itself to its host, another plant, for its sustenance. In other words, one's name determines one's character as "it lays out a life". It determines whether one will be a murderer or a swindler or a fool because it injects "probing roots". In effect, a father may unwittingly dispossess his child of initiative, motivation and principles as his character in life is already embedded in the name he is given at christening.

Besides, there is the allusion to the Sophoclean tragic character, Oedipus, in *Oedipus Rex*. He believes:

*A words' utterance  
When it lays out a life,  
As it did for Theban Oedipus  
Is the inspiration of a tragic play (p. 14) .*

This reference to Oedipus is very crucial to the message of dispossession of one's identity at birth. The knowledge-seeker in his quest to prove his identity committed abominable acts: he murdered his real father, married his mother and sired his own half-sisters. By this allusion in the poem, the poet predicts the worthless character of a person named "Obierika" and such other names, which distorts the child's personality.

There is also the synecdoche employed in the poem in:

*And I have known these  
Gathered in a bin,  
And sorted into a set of labelled boxes,*



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*Where you are a murderer, a fraud,  
Or even a justly mixed  
Quantity of blood and sinew  
If the landlord should say so (p. 15).*

Here, there is the synecdochical use of the words “blood and sinew”, which represents a physically strong and healthy person but without intelligence and motivation. The person, therefore, is a fool who has already been dispossessed of any drive because of the name he is given at christening.

The powerful imagery in “Gathered in a bin/and sorted into a set of labelled boxes” cannot be ignored. The “bin” gives the mental pictures of a trash, refuse and waste, while “boxes” gives the mental impression of caging, confinement and enclosure. The use of these two words paints a very clear picture of a worthless character that acts within the confinement of the name given to him at birth.

‘You are Led Now’ is a paradoxical poem. At one level, it reveals the material dispossession of the citizens by those in authority. The father is shocked that his son has broken his electric kettle because:

*He'd had it as long as you!  
it is true though:  
he brought it home from work  
the day after you were born;  
it was new too-  
you bought things new then,  
with their fresh-smelling wadding (p. 46).*

Now, the persona's father can no longer afford it and if he will buy a kettle, it is no longer a new one but it will be a second-hand. There is the undertone that the economy of the country is in a shambles as people can only afford second-hand goods; there is hunger, children hawk in the street and schools are shut down because of striking teachers who presumably refused to teach because of non-payment of their salaries and allowances.

At a second and a deeper level than the first, it is a paradox of the dispossession of ethical values, which are the bedrock of any decent society. There is no longer discipline as the son did not cry as a sign of remorse when he broke the electric kettle, and the father did not rebuke him.

Furthermore, the electric kettle that is broken is a private symbol used by the poet. It symbolizes the broken-down values. But if it is to be looked at as a symbol of African societal values, then it is not a good symbol because an electric kettle cannot represent traditional African values. Therefore, it must be seen as Western values which the elders imbibed without questioning their suitability.

Contrastingly, the younger generation does not appreciate this new set of values and their actions are seen as iconoclastic by the elders. They are already dispossessed of traditional African societal norms and are caught in a world

they do not understand like Obi Okonkwo in Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*. These foreign values have been watered down and adulterated over the years and "we have come down/ we have" (p. 46). The consequence of these distorted values is the violence and spiritual aridity in the society where a man is murdered when old shoes are found in his snatched bag and where there is no difference between robbers and law officers.

In the poem, there is the repetition of "we have come down,/we have" in lines 19 and 20 and "being so quick, /yes, quick:" in lines 51 and 52 of the poem, which emphasizes the theme of the poem, the prevalent loss of values, and adds musical quality to it.

Again, there is the controlling imagery in the poem in the word "dark", which gives the images of darkness and evil. As the son hawks in the streets because his school is shut down, he watches the evil played out therein. His lost sense of moral values at home is reinforced by the violence in the street where armed robbers and law enforcement agents unleash mayhem on the people.

Finally, there is the use of conceit where the young dispossessed cannot differentiate between robbers and law officers as both of them are alike. Either they both use violence on the people or armed robbers disguise as law officers to rob the people or that even the law officers use the guns meant to apprehend robbers to rob, shoot, maim and kill innocent citizens for flimsy reasons just as the robbers kill people for flimsy reasons, like killing a man for discovering only old shoes in the bag they snatched from him. This conceit underscores the triviality of life in an evil society where violence is the order of the day.

As in 'Public Man', the dispossession of initiative, the cyclic dependency, laziness, intellectual inertia and sheer stupidity that characterize African leaders and their successors are reinforced in the imagery of "shadows" in 'My Father's House'. For,

*a dutiful son will stay  
under his father's shadow,  
If there is one-  
my father's covers me  
quite,  
as if he designed it  
just for me; ... (p. 66).*

The word "shadow" has the images of imperfection, delusion, gloom, imitation and phantom. While the father is alive, he enjoys his son sniffing "under his feet" and the son is contented with the situation as he wishes for "nothing more". He finds out that he has "blackened/about the temples", but he can do nothing about it because his father has already dispossessed him of initiative and motivation. So the result of staying under his father's shadow is that he cannot maintain the once beautiful estate he inherits from the father.

This effect of dispossession of initiative by authorities in one's life is seen in the antithetical statement, "The walls are friendly/in a grey unsmiling way/through any harangue" (p.65). This antithesis, which is also a

personification of giving human attributes of “unsmiling” and “friendly” to an inanimate object “walls”, emphasizes the dilapidated state of the once-upon-a-time elegant edifice that is the father’s house. This view is supported by the irony of calling himself a “dutiful son”. He is a dutiful son who cannot maintain his father’s estate and watches:

*year by year  
spring new holes  
that widened by the day  
as sand-grains shook loose  
one by one  
and trickled away,  
and the roof that has turned  
black with rust  
as I watched (p. 66).*

The poet uses simile in his comparison of the visionless lyrical persona who enjoys staying under his father’s shadow, and cannot build himself “a small bungalow” with the gross poets with their vulgar imitation of Achebe’s literary works and the ambitious and power-drunk soldiers who hide under Nzeogwu to topple governments of their countries.

Akwanya draws attention to the traumatic experience of the Nigerian civil war in which so many lives were lost through violent death in the battle-field or at home through air raids; people die at home and at refugee camps through starvation and pestilence. And this terrible dispossession of the populace is encapsulated in the metaphor of

*Whatever the answer, I forgot  
these twenty-four years  
till those same dying eyes stared again  
in a nightmare,  
and showed again the face of civil war. (p.35).*

This direct comparison of the dead girl’s staring eyes, a girl that died of starvation at “charity’s doorstep” in an indifferent world, where none is the brother’s keeper and no good neighbourliness principle, where soldiers die in battlefield, pestilence ravages the villagers, people die of starvation, refugees fleeing their homes, and routine activities suspended show the extent the agents of war dispossess the populace, and the ugliness and the spiritual aridity of civil war.

Indeed, the poet feels that the greatest loss in the war is not the loss of limbs, life and property but the loss of innocence, fellow-feeling and peace of mind. The sight of the diseased, dying and dead is nothing as that has “toughened every nerve” and the persona is “getting used to all this”. And looking at the situation of the dispossessed, particularly children, who are refugees and die of starvation, he notes:

*Of us two  
she must have been the younger,  
about two years;  
it couldn't be more.  
And there she was,  
with nothing, no one  
in the wide world,  
that I could see. (P. 34).*

These young ones are physically uprooted from their homes and loved ones and thrust violently into an indifferent world where they are refugees. They are strangers in these refugee camps and people are indifferent to them and they are indifferent to people. Like William Blake, A.N. Akwanya employs one of the greatest ironies in *Pilgrim Foot* to show that things have fallen apart, that the pilgrim does not bring gifts but violence, suffering and death. The persona says:

*Some time before dawn she had crawled  
right up to charity's doorstep,  
no one knew where from, nor who showed the way.  
But had the effort drained her fatally?  
She was dead and staring  
when I came again from the communal morning piety (p. 35).*

The irony in the above is that though the young girl has managed to crawl to “charity’s doorstep”, where she ought to be given food and drugs to revive her from dehydration, nobody cares because no one knows her. In other words, war dispossesses people of their sense of moral values. Chukwuemeka Ike amidst his description of the valley of death – the starvation, the sickness, the dying and the death – in the Nigerian civil war, also notes the spiritual aridity in the people.

*Lying stark naked at the end of another  
school block was one more refugee who  
looked ready to follow the yet unburied  
corpse. But for the upward and downward  
movement of his ribs as he breathed you would  
have counted him already dead ...  
His own brother – also fast emaciating, but  
with enough flesh still left on him to be able  
to wear a pair of khaki shorts – his own  
brother walked past him unconcerned as if his brother  
meant nothing to him if his brother did  
not see the light of another day. (1993:224-5).*

There is no hiding place for both the soldiers and the civilians, particularly the civilians, who are refugees because,

*With the relentless pressure of a conquering army  
driving the helpless victims of war  
from one place of refuge to the sanctuary of a market  
space  
or school playground (p. 33).*

The phrases “sanctuary of a market space/ or school playground” seem to be a deviance. As Anthony Eyang writes, “But ‘deviance’ as a stylistic feature, suggestive of non-conformity, is basically purposeful and meaningful” (2005:158). Akwanya must have used the deviance for a purpose, for how can one associate a market or a school playground with “sanctuary”? The deviant, which is an epigram, must have been used to show that nothing is sacrosanct to the relentless conquering army and the dispossessed refugees, but most importantly that the refugees live, sleep, eat and worship in these refugee camps – markets and schools – throughout the period of the civil war. Therefore, there is no difference between the market, the school and the church: all serve the same purpose,

In ‘Ruins’, the road is a symbol that controls the theme of dispossession of the people. It is a symbol of civilization worth fighting for, worth dying for, worth possessing and worth loving. It is remembered that this road is very crucial because,

*Time was  
when it ran the living nerve  
through the heart of a nation  
from end to end (p.36).*

The same road symbolizes destruction as the idea behind who controls it is the source of a civil war. This war is very fierce, brutal and indeed a genocidal war as the poet alludes to the Hitler’s “final solution” to the Jewish question in the extermination of more than six million Jews during the Second World War. The road is, therefore, an instrument of ethnic cleansing as “the last memory of three clans/terminated in a civil war/”... (p. 38). The dispossession of lives and property is very tremendous as:

*... armies fought for it,  
broke through  
and rolled a convoy of  
munitions and men fifteen miles long  
into a mine (p. 36).*

One generation after the civil war, the road is discovered not to be attractive as before as it is now “almost a winding back road/because of a monster motor

way/that made them wonder” (p. 36). The road that caused a genocidal civil war in which people lost their lives and property is not worth the prize. The persona wonders like Rudbeck about his big dream, the construction of a road through Fada:

*A grand job. Far bigger and grander than he  
had ever thought possible. But what was  
it doing to Fada? Where were all the good  
results? Could it be that dirty old savages like  
the Emir and Waziri were right in their  
detestation of motor roads. That roads upset  
things, brought confusion, revolution. And  
wasn't there confusion enough? Wasn't everybody  
Complaining that the world was getting into such  
confusion that civilization itself would disappear*  
(Cary, 1969: 212).

Akwanya made abundant use of onomatopoeic words in this poem for stylistic effects. It is believed that “Poetry devoid of music is like a house without a roof, foo foo without soup, tea without sugar, a storey building without concrete reinforcement” (Okoro, 2006:ix). The poet recounts the destruction of buildings during the war in this manner:

*shell-shattered buildings,  
burnt-out husks  
and walls shot to pieces  
and tottering (p. 37).*

These onomatopoeic words above, therefore, invoke the image of great destruction to buildings during the civil war, reinforce the theme of dispossession of material possession and give rhythm to the poem.

This theme of great loss, moreover, is supported by the use of alliteration in the poem in.

*munitions and men fifteen miles long  
into a mine (p. 36).*

It does not only show the great number of soldiers and property lost in the genocidal war but also gives rhythm to the poem.

Again, the poet uses personification to depict the permanence of dispossession of property. Despite the development that has taken place, “the remains of three roadside homes” is “straining to put out the resisting walls”, “these ruins along the hard fought road,/they keep still”, and when the people:

*... wing back to the native turf  
the ruins are there*



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*and look out over the tall grasses  
that wave them on their way;  
blasted mouths are opened,  
remembering,  
the bullets and shells know  
your every last refuge (p. 38).*

The poet deliberately gives human attributes of “straining”, “resisting”, “keeping still”, “looking out”, “waving”, “remembering” to inanimate objects – ruins, walls and grasses – as if they have life. These ruins, like the staring eyes of the corpse that were never extinguished after twenty-four years in ‘Civil War’, bear testimony to the genocidal civil war.

The word “sceptre” in the poem is metonymically used to refer to the leaders – political and military – who “trace out mystic patterns on news- paper pages”. These leaders who are the agents of wars may be seen as extremists who destroy civilization with “... the touch of some furious and dogmatic religion, with its call to fantastic sacrifices, its tender resignations, its dreams and hopes uplifting the soul by the side of the most sombre moods of despair ...” (Conrad, 1975:294).

The dispossessed who suffer from the wars caused by the dispossessor are compared “as a flock of practised guinea fowls/that pick in a croft/listen, then pick again/ till the merest rustle is heard” (p. 38). However, these dispossessed, “the village dwellers are large hearted as nature/when it comes to taking in everything; /and they are as tender: ...” (p. 37). The use of simile in the comparison of the masses that suffer the effects of the war with nature is apt as it shows their kindness and love in trying to soothe the trauma of those that suffer most from the destruction and wreckage.

Besides, in ‘Seesaw’, conceit is used in “life, in her experience, was a seesaw” (p. 39). There is no similarity between life and a seesaw; however, they share the same qualities: instability and temporariness. The conceit points out the cyclic nature of life and death, joy and sorrow. To Nneka, there is instability of life in a war-torn society and a society where the leaders dispossess the led of every means of meaningful livelihood.

There is also the foregrounding of imagery in the poem. The predominant use of words like “scoured”, “withered”, “grey” gives the images of sickness and death, while “slammed” and “closed” give the mental impression of finality. These images are fore-grounded for a particular purpose —the permanence of suffering and hardship for the dispossessed in a violent society, where the leaders are insensitive to the problems of the masses. Those who suffer most the dispossession are women and children. Nneka is twice widowed and her children orphaned whose lives will never be the same again. And the finality of their loss is seen in the onomatopoeic words “slammed” and “echoed” in:

*how at her soldier’s death  
her life had slammed shut like a book*

---

*in her ear, and for many days  
her words echoed as in a drum. (p. 40)*

The poet employs simile to emphasize the great suffering of the dispossessed widow. He compares her thinness because of malnutrition and hardship as a widow and the breadwinner of three children “as a training bush newly clipped.” And her prominent eyes on a withered face is described “like fish stranded in ebb tide/upon the shore” (p. 39). Her changed physical appearance is revealed “like sky-writing on my brow”. The hardship she has undergone after her soldier-husband is killed in the civil war and the death of her son makes her to believe that “her life had slammed shut like a book.” The simile used underscores the suffering of the dispossessed and the permanence of that suffering

Human attribute of bearing children is given to the secession and declaration of Biafra in:

*since first she came of age at Biafra's birth  
married her soldier,  
was widowed in three months,  
and her little boy after a year  
was dead too (p. 39).*

It is not doubtless that by this personification, the poet wants the reader to see that Nneka's happiness is as short-lived as the state of Biafra because of her losses. Also there is the use of personification and rhetorical question in these lines below:

*Or was it wrong, when life whispered to her,  
to awake,  
wrong to embrace it? (p. 41)*

Life is seen as a human being that can whisper words of hope to somebody and capable of being embraced. The combined effects of the personification and the rhetorical question that need not be answered is to show Nneka's effort to forge ahead despite her losses and the futility of that effort since she has realized that, apart from the actual war that has ended, the economic war is still on and this, probably, would have been another source of her fears since life is a seesaw.

Allusion as a poetic device is used abundantly in ‘For the Record.’ Slavery and colonialism of Africans and Africa by the Arab slave traders and Europeans are alluded to “as they come in waves/across the western mountains” (p. 52). Slavery and colonialism brought so much suffering, hardship, uprooting and dispossession of Africans. He also uses allusion to refer to the persistent looting of Africa's resources by both white and black rulers as:

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*that all in it who hold privilege  
all, black or white,  
make notable uses of it –  
off record – (p. 52).*

He hints at the prevalence of military coups and counter-coups and situations where the military leaders transform themselves into presidents-for-life. These military heads of states and presidents-for-life also unleash untold suffering, hardship and violence on the dispossessed of the continent, who hope for a better government.

*Now though he gathers up his countenance,  
rises to a miracle  
of the generals promising a change,  
that now all tears are wiped away  
because they give up their uniforms.  
And indeed the tears no longer flow,  
staunch by despair,  
seed of successful tyranny (p. 53).*

And in order to present this great suffering and hardship the masses are subjected to by all the leaders – white or black– he uses imagery. To show the pain, anger and frustration of the dispossessed Africans as a result of Arab and Europeans' degradation of the continent, he uses the word "gritted". And the word "banish" gives the mental picture of exile, expulsion and alienation of the people, while "hell" is suffused with the mental impressions of eternal torture, inferno, punishment, misery, destruction and havoc. Also the word "hushed" gives the images of silence, concealment and suppression, while "tyranny" paints the pictures of cruelty, arbitrariness, oppression and despotism. The overall effect of the foregrounding of imagery in this poem is to paint a picture of totalitarian governments in Africa – whether run by black or white – which unleash hardship, suffering and cruelty on the dispossessed Africans, who are intimidated into silence. This silence may be as a result of the brute force of the rulers or because Africans have "native indifference", and they are a "protective brood" that accommodates their dispossession. Romanus Egudu x-rays the excesses of the political and military despots in Africa:

*Through the spectacles of growing guns  
or howling gowns  
they peered and edited  
the pages of our life (2002:36).*

In 'A Public man' the poet uses the lyrical persona, public man, as a symbol of Africa's showy, retrogressive and irresponsible leaders. These are leaders that are visionless because Public Man rails at his grandfather for selling his land for a keg of palm wine; his own father says he is his curse because of the good

life he had; he tells his son “how little I had left you”, and yet he has the effrontery to advise the son whom he has dispossessed by his squandermania that:

*I don't curse you  
my boy,  
but know you owe your son  
the pile you didn't get from me  
to scatter ! (p. 81)*

From this advice above, it necessarily follows that each successive government in Africa shirks the responsibility of putting the continent on the right footing, because each leader serves his interest first before that of the people. This theme of irresponsibility and selfishness is also seen in another of the poems in the collection with its ironic title, ‘Blessing’, where a father advises his dispossessed child:

*You will grow up somehow,  
you will  
God knows,  
we stopped everything,  
everything,  
and you can't have your childhood  
Poor thing ! (p. 62)*

Land is also another symbol of wealth and natural resources of Africa, which African leaders dispossess Africans of. This symbol is also reinforced by an ironic situation. Public man confesses he raged when his grandfather sold their land for a keg of palm wine, but when he comes into possession of the said land, he does worse than the grandfather. At least, he acknowledges he sold the land at a higher price; yet, he leaves little for his successor, his son; yet, he expects him to leave for the son a “pile you didn't get from me/ to scatter”.

The words “angry” and “raged” both give the mental impressions of hostility, exasperation, indignation, displeasure and passion. The word “curse” paints the pictures of evil, scourge, anathema, affliction, and profanity, while “toils” gives the images of hardship, suffering, extreme difficulty and pain. “Feast” makes the mental impressions of sumptuousness, pleasure, gratification and wastage. This collection of images put together paints a mental picture of a situation where leaders dispossess their people, while those who will succeed them rile and rage at their wastage. It seems that Africans' suffering is endless because the successors are not better than their predecessors.

Besides, in ‘Harvesters’, Akwanya once again shows his mastery of his message and the ornamental language with which he puts across that message. He is one of the literary artists, whom Okon Essien advises, “If we want great artists – poets, playwrights, novelists, musicians, etc., we must make it possible for such talented people to acquire such facility in language as well as enable

them to express their imaginations, feelings and insights freely” (Ndimele, 2006:3).

Akwanya uses the paradox of the “industrious weaver birds”, which destroy fields by eating up plants’ foliage as a paradox of indolent parasitic leaders – political and military – who bestride the African continent. In his view:

*Here most industrious weaver birds  
do their stunts,  
chorus a hoarse shrill riotous tune  
stripping the palms bare;  
they wait out in high boots  
the worst of the rains,  
building up their numbers  
for the yearly fray in the rice fields  
a hundred miles north (p. 28).*

Personification is used in the description of the symmetrical body of the birds as:

*Little fellows in dark blue coats,  
and tight fitting orange bibs  
stretched down front,  
and clasped to the throat; ... (p. 28).*

This personification presents the birds which ravage farmlands as tiny babies that are beautifully dressed. Also the pestilential visitation of the “little fellows” is also personified as the “harbinger’s visit”.

Another group of pests that destroy the rice field and strip the palms bare are the “industrious weaver birds”. Here, the birds are qualified with an adjective “industrious”, which gives human attribute to non-human. The stylistic effect of this personification is that it shows their ferocious and fatal attacks on the farmlands. The birds and the weaver birds, which have been personified, are actually the symbols of Africa’s leaders that dispossess their people.

There is also the irony in the poem because the owners of the would-be fields, which will be devastated by the insects and the weaver birds are vigilant. They are already in the target fields to put up a strong resistance to the devastation. In other words, the dispossessed must counter the excesses of their dispossessors, which in the last poem in *Pilgrim Foot*, ‘For the Family’, Akwanya suggests a solution: a violent opposition to the persistent dispossession of the masses.

*In his lifetime  
Ahime performed selfless service to the state  
for which he held many national honours;  
and he was a consensus-builder –*

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*indeed it is tragic  
that he should die  
in the unhappy circumstances  
of social strife (p. 92).*

Furthermore, in 'Short of Breath', the poet uses the symbolism of the "ram" like in William Blake's 'Tyger' to depict the aggressiveness, the fierceness, the determination, the strength, and the violence, which the dispossessed need to gain their freedom from alienation and deprivation of their fundamental human rights. As the lyrical persona says:

*I stand transfixed  
in sight of a big black ram  
tethered with a halter  
in a richly green plot.  
Alone in that wilderness  
he looks about him,  
ecstatic at the vast expanse of green:  
he ambles forward,  
stops,  
crops a blade here,  
a mouthful there (p. 48).*

The words "tethered", "leash", "peg" and "halter" give the mental pictures of restriction and deprivation which the people suffer.

To show their determination for freedom, the poet uses the imagery of destruction, devastation, violence and death as seen in such words as "trampled", "crushed", "withered" and "shreds". This imagery of violence, destruction and death is as a result of the dispossessed's opposition to the dispossession.

Another figure of speech, which the poet employs in the poem, is simile. He uses it to show the effects of the violent struggle for freedom on the masses. This underscores the fact that true freedom cannot be won without sacrifice. The big black ram, therefore, isolated in a wilderness, deprived of freedom of movement and denied the pleasure of green pastures in a fruitful land makes this forfeiture in order to gain his freedom. The losses are presented with a smile:

*Stubbornly he holds his ground  
and full of fight,  
though his tongue lolls  
like a mature tumor;  
though he slowly chokes to death,  
he quakes with pregnant energy  
like an ancient lorry  
idling (p. 49).*



The fear, the excitement, the expectation and the surprise in the lyrical persona if and only if the ram gains his freedom is personified in the phrase “thumping heart”. The beating of the heart which is a vital organ in the human body is given the attribute of a human being with hands, which it uses to beat. This is to show the extent of his fear and excitement about the dangers that lay ahead, assuming the ram gains its freedom after much struggle.

Also the word “thumping” in “thumping heart” is an onomatopoeic word, which points out the loud beating of the heart. This onomatopoeia echoes the thumping or the frenzied beating of a drum. It has musical effect in the poem.

‘Now I Have You’ is another poem with revolutionary impulses in the poetic collection. The “mad man” and the “ironical dog”, like the ram in the preceding poem, are the symbols of the oppressed and dispossessed masses that need the fierceness, aggressiveness, and the violence in the ram to throw off their oppressors and dispossessors.

There is the metaphor of the comparison of the “mad man’s smile” with the yard dog’s calmness and the ringmaster’s tricks. The three of them are dissimilar in their appearance, but they share one common feature: the unexpectedness of their action. This is the unexpectedness of the revolution of the dispossessed masses, which seemingly appeared to be content with their lot. The violence the calm dog can unleash on its victim is seen in the rhetorical question:

*if you have seen him seize a pecked young cock,  
young anything,  
fleeing for his life,  
and drag it back in the ring (p. 51).*

One cannot overlook the satirical tone of the poem, which is laced with irony. There is a subtle discrepancy between the deceptive smiling, calm and seemingly contented outward look of a person and the bitterness and violence in the person’s action. The poet satirically warns the oppressors of the masses about the impending violent resistance:

*Since the mad man  
and the ringmaster,  
the ironical dog,  
can I still bear a businesslike countenance  
or forget that a serene smile  
might just say,  
Now I have you:  
See (p. 51).*

Akwanya uses irony to underscore the introverted reaction of the oppressed and dispossessed in ‘If God Acquit’. They are ready to forgive “strong-armed robbery”, that is their leaders, who rob them but cannot forgive those who

“think differently” or “looking it”. The pre-emptive lesson for the latter is the “chopping of hands/ of feet”, while the former is left untouched.

There is the foregrounding of the imagery of violence, pain and cruelty in the words “massacre”, “murder”, “injuries” and “robbery”, while the mental pictures of anger, evil and hatred are seen in the words “malice”, “flaring” and “glare”. Through the imagery, the poet paints a lurid picture of the hatred and violence, which the dispossessed bear for other dispossessed, based on their religious and ethnic differences.

Akwanya uses simile to show the distorted vengeance which the dispossessed unleash on one of their own in ‘Anonymous’ and he compares it with the “lightning’s vengeance/in ancient times” (p. 86). The killing of the burglar at Niger’s trunk and the killings of primitive people in primitive societies both share the qualities of suddenness and brutality.

Biblical allusion is used to point out the similarity between the crucifixion of Christ and the burglar in ‘Anonymous’. Like the crucified Jesus, the brutally murdered dispossessed has this message:

*The charred remains on the roadside with a fixed gaze  
at the morning sky was as if praying,  
Lord  
do not hold against them this vile crime;  
it was just as if he was thinking that* (p. 85).

“With the washing of hands and face at dawn” is a Biblical allusion to the washing of hands of Pontius Pilate after he handed over Jesus to his Jewish accusers. The action of both is aimed at the purgation of conscience, the declaration of innocence and dissociation from responsibility for the murder of innocent men.

Again, the extra-judicial killing of the burglar, like the killing of Jesus, defies the twin-pillars of natural justice. The burglar’s murderers as Pontius Pilate are all accusers, judges and executioners of the sentence of death imposed on the accused. The stylistic effect of these Biblical allusions of the murder of a man for trivial offence shows the insecurity of life in a violent and lawless society.

## Conclusion

It is through the only tool of creative artists that Akwanya has sent out his message of dispossession of the populace and the consequences of such dispossession. This is unachievable without his appropriation of literary or ornamental language that binds the message together like a web or a puzzle, and imprints on the reader’s mind his indelible message. If not for his mastery and usage of embellished language, *Pilgrim Foot* would have come out with an eyesore appearance of an unweeded garden, or an unfurnished building, or a hastily-sewn dress or a badly-knocked together desk.

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## 20. The English Language and the African World View: The Nigerian Case Study

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The study is an exploration of the suitability of English language in expression of the African world view. The language question of African literature exposes that the average African writer does not have much option left in consideration of wider coverage. In achieving this feat however, he must ensure he uses the language to express his people's sensibilities appropriately as failure to do so reduce credibility, plausibility and as well alienates the work from the people it is originally meant for.

### 1. Introduction

English Language in Nigeria today has shifted beyond the 'language of the colonialist'. It has assumed a dimension that even the original owners could not have conceived of.

It has gone beyond language of officialese and bureaucratese but even to that with which the Nigeria world view is expressed in literary writings.

One of the things fictions does better than poetry and drama is giving us a panoramic, larger, more comprehensive picture of social life in its concrete everyday realities. In the process, we see the customs, traditions and beliefs around which the activities of social life are organized.

This study intends to explore how well our writers have managed to express our world views in English Language or rather how suitable the language is for Nigerian fiction. There will be an exploration of five texts within five decades. This should assist in deciding how suitable or not English Language (has been and) is for the expression of our world view.

#### 1.1 The Language Debate Revisited

Even Chinweizu et al agrees that "it is pointless debating whether or not to use these western languages in our literature". But it is pertinent we revisit the issue to provide a background for our argument.

Critics like Roscoe and Povey had earlier claimed that Nigerian fiction remains an appendage of English fiction because of the language of expression, likewise General Moore in *The Chosen Tongue* (1969) implies that English is the only correct idiom of literary expression for us. However, this hegemonic argument of Eurocentric critics had long been refuted.

Another school of thought on the language question is that of the Africanists or Afrocentric view. They believe that only indigenous languages are suitable for literary expression. They urge the writers and audience of African literature to reject the fatalistic acceptance of the unassailable position of English (or any other language) in African Literature. Proponents of this school of thought include writers and critics like Ngugi wa 'Thiongo, Emeka Okeke-Ozeigbo, Obi Wali,

Wole Soyinka and so on. They believe we should be ready to sacrifice time and resources towards the realization of a true African literature.

The third group comprises those that have taken the middle course in the argument. They argue that the multilingual nature of the continent does not allow every writer express himself in his indigenous African language otherwise we end up with crops of ethnic literatures. To buttress this point, African writers that had written in their indigenous languages like D.O. Fagunwa, Shaban Roberts were not even invited to the conference at Makerere (1962) at all and they pointed out this fact. This necessitated the Eurocentric view but some like Chinua Achebe, Timothy Wangusa, Ezekiel Mphahlele that these European languages should continue being used as the media of literary expression. They however argued that the writer “should bend such languages to accommodate African experiences”. This is why a writer like Achebe asserts that the language had been given to him and he intends to use it maximally. This takes us to the question of how?

Chinweizu continues “a more immediate issue is how to write well in these languages”. This implies that for wider communication, English is the most suitable but it will be wrong for us to want to use it like the English. Our language of literary expression must in fact express our own world views and we should draw a distinction between the language and the Nation. Hence Nigeria is not and can never be England.

## **1.2 Suitability of English Language in expressing the Nigeria world view**

A French poem translates, thus:

Do you not feel my suffering  
and despair, which is beyond  
compare.  
To be forced to express in French,  
This heart which comes from Senegal?

“Although written by a Haitian poet, these lines illustrate clearly the basic dilemma of Nigerian writers”. Wautheir (1978:32) further posits that “although there is need to use a foreign language (English) it does not seem to be a definitive solution to the cultural and political aspects of our problems”.

David Diop also gives a negative reply to this quest. In his opinion, the African writer “knows that by writing in a language which is not that of his brothers, he cannot genuinely translate the voice of his country” (38).

Leon Damas “clamours that the words of the colonialist’s language should be hurled into a delirious torrent which belongs to the African race alone”.

So also Janheinz Jahn says “the language the writer uses is unimportant. It is the way in which he uses it, which is specifically African or not”.

The above argument emphasizes that English might not be a perfect medium for the expression of everything in Nigeria, but since existing multilingual situation does not permit otherwise, we are stuck with it. We shall study how Nigerian writers have domesticated the language; how well it has served them in expressing theirs in a space of five decades. The study will begin with Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, which actually set the trail for others to follow in this trend.

### 1.3 Standard English in Nigerian Fiction

Before the advent of writers like Chinua Achebe into the Nigerian literary scene, there had been others like Amos Tutuola and Cyprian Ekwensi. The two wrote in a most interesting and peculiar manner but because, there are no adherents to their style today, theirs do not call for extensive study.

Achebe on his part also experimented with language(s) and the success of his experiment (unlike Okara's) has brought forth torrents of followers that till today calls for extensive literary research.

There are two kinds of language form under the category of Nigerian writers who use the Standard English. There are those who use Standard English but are still faithful to their indigenous languages in the infusion of such items as proverbs and sayings.

On the other hand, there are those who reflect the Nigerian world view but do this in a language which does not really take much from the idioms of the indigenous language.

It has been highlighted earlier that in the absence of a common indigenous tongue, we must make do with English language. Our focus is how suitable this option is in the expression of that which is Nigerian.

### 1.4 The Nigerian Case Study

#### 1.4.1 Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

Eustace Palmer (1979:77) posits that the most significant local form in relation to the language of Achebe's novels is the proverb. He explains further that this gives "a genuinely African flavour to the character's speech. Also used to enhance aesthetic appeal".

The author himself describes his work as an atonement of a prodigal son. The work was meant to set records straight. Considering the (very) derogatory impressions created by writers like Joseph Conrad and Joyce Cary's *Mister John*, writers like Achebe took it as a personal task to show that Africans were not as portrayed.

Achebe uses Standard English but an exploration of *Things Fall Apart* shows that even the barely literate Nigerian is very much in tune with his message.

A form of greeting like "Umuofia Kwenu!" and the response like "yaa" has no perfect equivalent in English language. He (Achebe) goes ahead and records it like that. Recording it like "the people of Umuofia welcome" is literally killing the flavour that comes with the traditional greetings.

Other nuances like 'Ogbanje', 'Ogbuefi', 'Efulefe' and 'Dibia' are used in his texts because they sound better (without losing their colour in their local forms) than in translation. Other utterances like: "If something pursues us, we shall escape but if we pursue something, we shall catch it" (*Anthills...* 229) might not sound like a prayer to the English but an average Nigerian knows this is a prayer.

The Igbo cosmological belief can also be deduced from this text (*Things...*). There is a strong belief in the many deities of the Igbo world. Deities like 'Ani', the earth goddess, Amadioha and that believed to be granted a soul or spiritual double called a man's 'chi' throughout the work. There is the retention of many native words which otherwise translated becomes unsuitable. This might have prompted us to say that English is not suitable for the expression of the Igbo (or



Nigerian world view) but even all these native words do not reduce intelligibility at all. Proverbs, myths and the folklore of the Igbo's are still extensively conveyed across e.g. the New Yam Festival.

We can see that despite the use of Standard English, he draws from the idiom of his people in a manner akin to commitment.

#### 1.4.2 The Nigerian world view in Soyinka's novels 1960-1970

Another writer that uses the standard form of English language is Wole Soyinka. The way he uses language is distinct from the way Achebe does. Soyinka has been described as a writer that is deeply versed or rooted in the ways of his people although he has also been accused of being esoteric and obscure, writing only for the intellectual class.

For instance, in his works, *The Interpreters* (1965) and *Season of Anomy*, the deities are not even directly mentioned or presented as characters in interplay of actions. Rather, human characters are endowed with the qualities of the Yoruba deities.

Most of the major characters in *The Interpreters* are described in such a way that the reader can establish relationships between them and certain deities in the Yoruba pantheon. Egbo, for instance represents Ogun, who in turn is associated with blood. Egbo's obsession with blood is shown in his story about the girl he claims he has deflowered. This is however how far his resemblance goes with that of the gods. He is an indecisive and visionless character unlike Ogun which is believed to be an embodiment of self will and initiatives. Another character is Ofeyi who seems to represent the creative side of the same god (Ogun) in *Season of anomy*. Like Ogun, he is an innovator. We see this in the way Aiyero scheme is transformed into an enviable social model. The virulent nature of Ogun is also reflected in him.

Again in *The Interpreters*, Lazarus and Sekoni are characters whose social roles are expressed through mythical representations. Dan Izevbaye (1981:24) brings out the relationship between these characters and the gods: "Sekoni is modeled after Sango, the Yoruba god who in tradition possesses promethean gift of fire but uses it only as the sign of his wrath". Sekoni's enthusiasm to put the static electricity plan back to shape is an evidence of his Sango characterization. Lazarus, the character who assumes the spiritual role in the work is an albino. Among the Yoruba, the albino is regarded as a mythical being. Izevbaye continues "they are held sacred and in awe. It is therefore appropriate for Lazarus, the albino to serve as the bridge between the terrestrial existence (existence on earth and the spiritual world). It is from him that we seek for a mythical interpretation of the society enacted in *The Interpreters*".

Thus we can infer that the former accessibly exposes the world view of his(Soyinka) people while the later also deal with the world view of his people, but his use of language does not readily expose this fact.

#### 1.4.3 Flora Nwapa in 1966

Almost a decade after Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, *The Interpreters* and then *Seasons of Anomy*, Nwapa wrote *Efuru*. Soyinka's use of English does not suggest a general trend in the use of language. Rather, the cult of English tempered with African flavour seemed to thrive stronger.

Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* was also published in 1966. The English used is standard but despite this standard form, the Nigerian sensibility is not lost at all. Words like 'ganashi', 'gbonu' to greet someone in pains (after *Efuru* is circumcised) are encountered. The word 'circumcise' is not even mentioned in the text, we see it depicted as 'take her bath', 'feasting girl' etc the lullaby Ogea sings for Ogonim when *Efuru* is long in coming home, the 'thanksgiving' Nwosu organized after being operated upon successfully—by killing a white cock to thank his chi', the full moon night when children go out in groups, sing, pray for the women to give birth to one at a time (it was evil to have twins then), Eneke's moonlight tales about the beautiful girl that almost got married off to the hideous spirit, the story of the woman of the lake and even the ritual *Efuru* had to take to show her innocence of the adultery that she was accused of. All these draw extensively once again from the Igbo tradition and world view. There are also retention of many native words, greetings, the market days, (Afor, Nkwo, Orie and Eke) which do not reduce our comprehension of the work but rather transpose us to the setting, make us not only feel the characters but identifying with them as the African world view is quite similar even in the different regions.

#### 1.4.4 Two Decades after *Things Fall Apart*

*Girls at War and Other stories* came in 1972 - from Chinua Achebe again. This is also another work that to a very great extent explores the African world view and the nature of his Igbo traditional society. The belief of the Igbos about the insane is exposed in 'The Madman', their belief in traditional medicine, charms and oaths in 'The Voter', the relationship between the living, the dead and the child to be born is exposed in 'Death Men's Path, encounter with the water goddess called 'mammy-water' in 'Uncle Ben's Choice'.

The language here again reveals the society and its belief. For instance, the elders' proverb in 'The Voter', "We have climbed the iroko tree today, it will be foolish of us not to come down with all the firewood we need". This is circumlocutory and an indirect way of demanding for bribes for the electorates' co-operation and is exactly the way an Igbo elder will speak.

Once again we observed that writing in English does not prevent a writer from conveying his message. He has the option of retain local nuances he feels cannot be adequately catered for by the foreign and borrowed language.

#### 1.4.5 Iyayi's Heroes in 1986

Literary history in Nigeria will never forget Festus Iyayi. Not only for his commitment to the under privileged but also for his profoundness. He leaves the reader with a vivid depiction of that which he seeks to convey.

*Heroes* is an imaginative recount of the civil war episode in Nigeria. He paints the brutality that came along with the war and he indicts those who claim to be the heroes of the war. Rather than 'the Generals' with the shining stars on their shoulders, we are made to realize that the real heroes were the Sergeants and other men of rank and file out there on the warfront giving their lives for the two warring nations.

Despite the fact that context here is completely different from those earlier highlighted, we still see the "Nigerian Flavour" throughout. A word like 'Nyamiri' translated into English would never capture the derogatory intent of Nigeria

soldiers against the Biafrans. And when Osime the journalist says of Salome “I will not scratch her itch”, the Nigerian knows perfectly well what he means.

Despite the fact that the setting is not only post-independent Nigeria but also contemporary and major cities, we still get a feel of the ‘Nigerian Flavour’. There is no mystification of language (there is no need for this) and no world view to be explored but then his English is far from ‘English English’ for instance when he says “The society is blacker than the darkness”, he expresses a Nigerian sensibility. Also when he says in his reverie “the commanders are busy drinking the blood of the nation, the blood of the soldiers, young workers o the first generation” an average Nigerian knows this is Iyayi’s ways of coming closer to the reader to express the illogic of sending men out to die while wining and dining at the wedding party of the young president.

#### 1.4.6 Ashimole’s *Just in case* (2005)

Lizi Ashimole writes *Just in case* five decades after Achebe’s *Things Fall apart*. The use of language has come a long way.

Ashimole’s contemporization of Biblical events comes across in perfect Standard English. It is a creative endeavour that showcases creativity at its peak apart from the didactic values of faith in God for healing, deliverance and mercy.

At the level of language use however, we observe a far cry between Ashimole’s language and that observed decades ago. She almost begins to make one believe no language can cater for the Nigerian of today. Her characters, from the beggars in the colony of Never-Never, to princess’, mother-in-law (who is supposed to be an uneducated old woman in the village), to the village women and their numerous tales of woe, to ‘Baba’ the traditional medicine-man, all speak English to the point of perfection.

Despite the fact that Ashimole employs a lot of dialogue, the work is completely removed from any Nigerian society. Hardly do we see any local nuance or the rich verbal repertoire that Nigerians are known for. Proverbs which are the essence of speech in a traditional society are missing even in her traditional settings.

This is not meant to indict her story as implausible or unrealistic (the work is amazingly credible for straight Biblical adaptation) but the use of language or perfect English amongst all her characters reduces credibility and plausibility. They should have spoken (or used English) the way we do in the real society for instance J.B. the blind beggar in the real society would ordinarily not be so fluent with English.

This might not be unconnected with the author’s background (she is acclaimed to be the daughter of a professor). But she, to a large extent attempts to show that with English, we can say just anything we want to say.

### 1.5 Summary

The study has tried to examine suitability of English language in the expression of the Nigerian world view. There was need to revisit the language debate and we discovered that today, the African with Eurocentric view holds sway. Nigerians have continued to write in English but they have used this medium in a way that appeals to their primary audience, Africans. They have also bent the language to accommodate the Nigerian world view as much as possible. Hence, even in perfect

English we see our myths, proverbs, folktales cosmological beliefs (even Wole Soyinka that is termed obscure and esoteric does so in his own way). And when these writers see that a translation reduces the essence of meanings, they retain the local nuances e.g. ‘chi’, ‘kwenu’, ‘mbadee’, ‘dibia’, ‘mammy-water’ and so on.

The study also discovered that recent trends with the example of Ashimole’s *Just in Case* shows that almost anything and everything can be depicted with English but as highlighted, credibility is greatly impaired.

### 1.6 Conclusion

This implies that we cannot and should not attempt to write like the British no matter how good we are with their language. As Chinweizu et al sum it up, “language and nation are not the same... the two should never be confused”. Writers like Achebe who because of Igbo values and experiences have had to bend English language in order to express these experiences and values, have continued to appeal to not only their Nigerian audience but their African audience at large. Since at this juncture, there is no hope of a common indigenous language; we should continue to use English in the way our works would not lose their essence.

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## 21. Nigerian Pidgin & Dramaturgy in Soyinka's *The Beatification of Areaboy*

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The power of theatrical performance to bridge socio-cultural barriers in multicultural societies is examined in this essay as Soyinka experiments with Nigerian pidgin (NP) in his play, *The Beatification of Areaboy*. It explores Soyinka's conscious "conscription" of language of the "plebeians" in his scrutiny of the maladies of governance in a post-Independence African state and posits that this linguistic tool could become a medium of demystifying sociopolitical realities for the disempowered strata in society.

No language, Ayo Banjo (1983:7) argues, is ever a "monolithic phenomenon." Thus, the English language, like other languages, exists in different varieties. A distinct variety of English found in Nigeria is what Biodun Adetugbo (1984:17) calls "Nigerian English," which is the nation's language of governance, education and social mobility. The dominance of this variety of English in these domains has been described by Ayo Bamgbose (2005:55) as "the hegemony of English." However, an "adulterated" and perhaps anti-hegemonic form of the English language exists in the mode of "Nigerian Pidgin" (NP), which Ben Elugbe (2006) says, is Nigeria's most widely spoken language. Though Nigerian Pidgin has multiple varieties in the country, the accounts of Munzali Jubril (1995:232ff) and Elugbe (1995:283ff) confirm that they are all "mutually intelligible."

But if the status of NP as a linguistic verity has been established by these linguists, a close scrutiny of the aesthetic manipulation of NP in dramatic texts has not been undertaken from available literature.<sup>1</sup> Soyinka's *The Beatification of Areaboy* thus provides a prism from which may be glimpsed a dialectical interface between what the Nigerian semiotician Ropo Sekoni (1990) calls "the infrastructure of literature" – language – and aesthetico-ideological matters.

It is true that Nigerian literary artists, from Dennis Osadebey's "Black Trouble" (1957), through Aig Imoukhuede's quasi-negritudist poem, "One Wife for One Man" (1959), Mamman Vatsa's poems (1981), Ken Saro Wiwa's "Dis Nigeria Sef" (1985), to Tunde Fatunde's *No Food No Country* (1985) and *Oga Na Tief Man* (1986) [Jubril; 1985:233-4], have all experimented with NP as both a communicative and aesthetic tool in their "literary productions," as Pierre Macherey (1985) would say, yet, Soyinka's deployment of this aesthetico-linguistic device in *The Beatification of Areaboy* is dramaturgically strategic to his plot structure, character delineation, evocation of mood, and an anti-hegemonic challenge to the dominance of the language of the elite – English.

A panoramic sketch of the dramatic canvass of *Beatification* is necessary to appreciate Soyinka's conscious dramaturgical deployment of Nigerian Pidgin in the play. Though the play is set in a historically determinate period of Nigeria's history, i.e., the post-Independence era with the military in power, it is however



not a historical document but an imaginative interpretation of the socio-economic predicaments of city dwellers as instanced in Nigeria's economic capital city, Lagos. The city's multiple socio-economic disarticulations signified in its chaotic modes of transportation, massive youth unemployment and underemployment symbolized in the "Areaboy" syndrome are the raw thematic materials for Soyinka's aesthetic manipulation. These matters are further compounded by Nigeria's power wielders who alienate the land of the autochthonous dwellers of Maroko, a "prime residential area right on the lagoon," as one of the characters in the play confesses (1999:81). Though a court had earlier ruled in favour of the settlers, the power elite subverts this, and forcefully ejects them through the repressive apparatuses of the state – the military and police (Althusser, 1977:142).

Tied to this bouquet of maladies in the play is the conspicuous consumption of the power-elite represented by Chief Kingboli, a prominent surveyor whose nameless son is the bridegroom, and the bride, Miseyi, the iconoclastic daughter of Prof. Semaku, a well-heeled former minister of oil and petroleum resources. It is within this dramatic scope that Soyinka deploys the language of the dispossessed classes, Nigerian Pidgin, not only as a dramaturgic device but also as an ideological construct that contests what Ayo Bamgbose (2005:55) calls "the hegemony of English."

The delineation of characters in *Beatification* is enhanced through the linguistic competence of each representative of the various antagonistic social classes that feature in the text. The playwright may thus be said to have achieved what Sekoni (1990) calls "polarized characterization" through each character's use or non-use of Nigerian pidgin. Representatives of the dominant social forces like the Military Governor, the Master of Ceremonies, the Mother of the Day, Military Officer, Bridegroom, Chief Kingboli, etc., all articulate their views in standard "Nigerian English" (Adetugbo, 1984).

The Military Officer's celebration of the eviction of Maroko inhabitants is illustrative:

... we didn't merely bulldoze it, we dynamited every stubborn wall, then set fire to the rubble. The place was disease-ridden! No point developing it for decent citizens only to have them die of some lingering viruses from way back. Those squatters might be immune to anything, but we have to think of future residents...

[*Beatification*, 1999:80]

But the utterances of characters like Trader, Cyclist, Shopworker, Newsvendor, Prisoner 1, Prisoner 2, and Boyko are heavily dominated by Nigerian Pidgin. The Shopworker highlights this:

... I beg, leave me. Look how I bin run come work instead of chopping my breakfast jejely. I tink say I done late so much, demo go sack me.

[*Beatification*, 1999:11]

And the declassified status of Prisoners is vividly portrayed when Prisoners 1 and 2 speak:

Prisoner 2: “I sorry too much for all these people wey still dey outside. How dem dey manage survive, enh? How anybody dey manage? (1999:70)

Prisoner 1: “Mama Put, I dey come o. Make you put me two naira *konkere* at the ready. Two meat... when man taske Mama Put *konkere*, e no go believe say na de same bean den dey take make we own sapagiri for prison. (1997:71)

Soyinka’s effective conjuration of the debilitating conditions of the Nigerian prison system is thus achieved through the deployment of Nigerian pidgin. Nigerian Pidgin thus becomes a “class denominator”<sup>2</sup> in Soyinka’s dramaturgy.

The ability of language to encode multiple significations is exploited in the play not only as an ironic foil, but to equally elicit humour as instanced in the dialogue between Boyko and Bigman Shopper, with Boyko utilizing NP:

Enter BIGMAN SHOPPER, pursued by BOYKO

BIGMAN SHOPPER: Go away! I tell you I have no car for you to look after. Go and find yourself another customer.

BOYKO: Oga, dis place no good. Anything can happen to your car. But if you lef’ am to Boyko, na one hundred percent guarantee.

BIGMAN SHOPPER (stops and faces him squarely) I think something is wrong with your ears.

BOYKO: Na all dis traffic noice, oga, ‘e fit make man so deaf ‘e no go hear en’ting, even thunder sef. Even if dem dey break windscreen of Mercedes in broad daylight for in very front, person no fit hear.

BIGMAN SHOPPER: Is that so?

BOYKO: To God who made me.

[*Beatification* 1999:21-22]

It is interesting to note, however, that despite the use of NP by declassed elements in the play, some “plebeian” characters like Mama Put and the Barber are equipped to speak impeccable Standard English. And ironically, the protagonist of the play, Sanda and the bride he eventually “marries,” Misyi, despite their pro-plebeian activities, do not speak NP throughout the text. Thus it may be said that Soyinka’s polarized characterization is not absolute.

Also, the nation’s post-Independence socio-cultural contradictions: unemployment, inflation, wastage of human lives through a civil war, abuse of youths through the non-provision of adequate educational institutions, environmental degradation, land alienation, usurpation of power by military dictators, and the perversion of justice, are thematic issues that have been transformed aesthetically through the use of NP in *Beatification*. For example, the presence of the Cyclist on stage is a paradoxical explication of the “reversal of fortune” for a former oil-rich state which now parades bicycles as a mode of modern transportation:

- 
- TRADER: Oga Sanda, make you look this tin wey I dey look soo. Mama Put, Mr. Barber, all of una, make you come look o. Because I no believe this ting at all, even though my eye tell me say I not to dream I dey dream am.
- CYCLIST: Was matter with all of una? I say I wan' price dis tie.
- NEWSVENDOR: Wey all these reporters sef? Man no dey see dem when something extra dey happen.
- TRADER: Ah, but this is wonderful. The last time I see bicycle for dis Lagos, na before oil boom. Ehn? You mean to say somebody still dey wey no troway im bicycle inside lagoon?

[*Beatification* 1999:24-27]

Though Bertolt Brecht is credited with the re-introduction of songs as a dramaturgic device in modern Western theatre, songs have always been integral in African or "Total" theatre (Saint Gbileka, 1997, Olu Obafemi, 1999). Songs by characters like Minstrel, Prisoners, Professional musicians, and Sanda highlight the ideological contests among the contending forces in the play. However, the Pidgin songs of the Minstrel reveal the playwright's sardonic humour:

Minstrel (sings)  
 I love dis Lagos, I no go lie  
 Na inside am I go live and die  
 I know my city, I no go lie  
 E fit in nation like coat and tie.  
 When Lagos belch the nation swell  
 When nation shit, na Lagos dey smell  
 The river wey flow for Makurdi market  
 You go find hin deposit for Lagos bucket

[*Beatification* 17]

From the above, it is glaring that Soyinka's experimentation with Nigerian Pidgin as a dramaturgic artifice in *Beatification*<sup>3</sup> not only enriches the play's plot structure, character delineation and the linguistic dexterity of the various characters, but equally heightens the aesthetic intensity of the play through the incorporation of songs in NP. This, perhaps, may mark a new phase in Soyinka's dramaturgy as he consciously valorizes the language of Nigeria's plebeian characters, a segment of the society much abused by its rulers whose hegemonic language, English, he thus dialectically challenges.

## Notes

1. Saint Gbileka, in "A New Theatre Aesthetics and the Radicals," in his book, *Radical Theatre in Nigeria*, Ibadan: Caltop Publications, only makes a tangential reference to Ola Rotimi's use of pidgin in the play, *If*, which Gbileka argues is "not to distinguish the class that each come (sic) from, but to enhance the diffusion of the playwright's political messages" (1997:192).
2. Douglas Killam and Ruth Rowe, "Pidgin Literature," *The Companion to African Literature*, Oxford: James Currey, 2000, 211-212.
3. Soyinka's *The Jero Plays, Death and the King's Horseman, From Zia with Love*, etc., had earlier utilized NP at a lower dramaturgic level.

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## 22. Nigerian Languages in Peace and Conflict Resolution: The Case of Ezeigbo's *The Last of the Strong Ones*

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This paper seeks to reveal the techniques of conflict resolution in African society through the use of the indigenous language. Every language addresses the fundamental issues of her society. African languages are used to address issues pertaining to sub-sects of African cultures as well as many other issues. Akachi Ezeigbo, in *The Last of the Strong Ones*, confronts issues bordering on her society, pointing out ways in which such issues could be tackled. Her methods reveal the key to peaceful resolution of conflicts, provided that treachery is not deceptively concealed in the process.

### **Introduction**

The issue of reforms borders on taking conscious effort at correcting some observed ills and anomalies within a system. Education and research have revealed some inconsistencies in the applications of our policies as far as language, literature and culture are concerned. This is not quite unexpected considering the results of Berlin Conference where the continent of Africa was placed on a table, dissected and scrambled for by the super powers of Portugal, Britain, and France. Pieterse has it that the African continent was arbitrarily divided into spheres of political domination by the metropolitan power of Europe (ix). The traumatic experiences of displacement have left the Africans disoriented from its beautiful values. Each man tries to walk in a shoes cobbled for him by colonial imposition.

The act of taking steps at correcting issues also hangs among others, on dialogue which is a two-way discussion effort. Dialogue can hold between two opposing groups as well as between parties in the sense that one camp may try to find ways among themselves on how they will approach the task at hand, especially if there is need to present one's situation before a superior camp. This is the major technique that Ezeigbo exploits in Umuga's attempt to present their predicaments to "Kosiri", the whiteman, their colonizer.

Since the Umuga people do not understand the language of "Kosiri", it behooves therefore that the services of an interpreter is needed. And of course since the first major contact after the ensued hostility is an avenue to bridge the gap, a letter was necessary for this purpose. Although the representative used to send forth their message of peace distorted their voice, the entire process was communal. The Obuofu met and jointly gave their views to the traitor. This paper seeks to highlight the process by which the ensuing conflict was attacked. It is presented in five major section: introduction which is the foregone, Colonialism: a threat to world peace, Nigeria language: a panacea for conflict resolution, Conflict resolution in Akachi's *The Last of the Strong Ones* and conclusion.



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**Colonialism: A Threat to World Peace**

The issue of colonialism is a rich, deep literacy well for creative writers. Colonialism means the act of another power, forcefully exerting political control over another, considered to be less competent in managing her affairs. Colonialism robs one of worth and identity. It has the tendency to subjugate and possibly eliminate the cultures of its victims. Colonialism is a forceful imposition of political powers on its subjects by supposed superior power(s) through the use of sophisticated weapons.

Amadi identifies three phases in which colonialism occurs as follows: deprivation of political powers, neocolonialism and intellectual colonialism (7). According to him, the first stage is the stage of actual imposition. The second and third stages, are the direct manifestations of the first. It is a known fact that economic powers and intellectualism cannot thrive where there is no political authority. This monster operated for more than a century in Africa and left the continent enormously draped in its destructive cloak.

Africans were controlled, dictated to, physically and mentally forced to obey and perform the orders of the colonial masters. One's inability to express one's feelings more often than not, leads to frustration because man's most desirable weapons are self assertion and fulfillment which are only possible and derivable in a free society. The other two phases of colonialism, neocolonialism and intellectual colonialism come well after the invaders have purportedly withdrawn their physical symbol of authority. Here a "token independence" is granted to the servant but economic enslavement continues. All means to economic independence are frustrated which in turn affects intellectual development.

The cankerworm, colonialism, leads to a loss of identity because the erstwhile indigenous cultural values have been buried by the imposition of this invading culture. The custodian of the old values are restricted by fear, from transferring what they inherited to the newly born such that as time rolls by, the newly born only know what the invading culture has left in its trail. The obscure search for identity is a desperate struggle with a persistent haunting fear which may make life purposeless (Amadi, 53). The displaced value makes one float because one does not have a root in the newly acquired tenets and none in one's biological culture. The total intellectual debasement leads to intellectual inertia which results in inferiority complex especially when issues concerning one's culture are explicated.

The intellectual debased victims of colonialism no longer see things in their right perspectives. Values are distorted and misrepresented especially to the unsuspecting newborns who have not yet understood "life as it was lived in the community". Akachi Ezeigbo fears that the generations yet unborn are bound to be contaminated "with the distorted account that Kosiri and his agents were bound to present" to them, if nothing is done to preserve their beautiful tradition (12).

In efforts to make a change for peace in situations of threat, there has to be some discussions. The process of discussion usually leads, to change which in "itself is not a threat". Ezeigbo confirms that her fears lie not on change itself but on the violence and destructive "nature of the change sweeping through the land like rain-bearing wind" (1). She notes that:

... positive change is creative and constructive; it is not seen as disruptive. But the manner of change in Umuga was not positive. For many moons, I meditated on the nature of change in the lives of our people. My soul cried out against the violation our tradition had suffered and would suffer for a long time to come... (1).

It is obvious here that so much has gone wrong since the forceful imposition of the white presence in Umuga and a deep sense of fear that grips the people is that “if nothing was done to counter this headlong rush to destruction”, Umuga would go into extinction hence “meetings and meetings and meetings” were held accordingly (1-2).

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the writer is not so much concerned with the physiological change that would take place like she is of the psychological. It is in the minds and brains that the disruptive change is worse and permanently imprinted. Its effect is so enormous that every other thing becomes inferior besides the newly stuffed concepts. If one did not know of the former mores, then whatever goes into the brain becomes the ideal even where such concepts are a devaluation of one’s cultural mores.

Intellectual colonialism is a vicious mental disorientation which is rooted in inferiority complex. Presently Nigerian intellectuals imbibe foreign ideologies without any attempt to research into our own “socialism and extended family system” which lie with us since creation (Amadi, 8). While assessing the effect of intellectual colonialism, Elechi Amadi opines that:

English kings, some of whom rules kingdoms much less than the ancient kingdoms of Benin and Oyo not to talk of the vast empire ruled by Usman dan Fodio, wore crowns and sat on thrones, but we insist that all our kings wear caps and sit on stools. The European gods (Odin, Jupiter, etc.) were all called by their proper names but, copying our former masters, we call, our gods juju and our religion mere superstition (9).

Apart from the above observed by Amadi, we continue to regard our religious practices as fetish and barbaric without making any effort to inwardly assess the strong values of our culture with the view of correcting the weak values based on our newly acquired knowledge. This confirms Ezeigbo’s observation that “the alien intruders neutralized every activity or rituals that was not in their interest. They sought to kill in our people a hunger for our tradition” (149). It was now possible for any insolent child to climb any fruit tree and harvest them without recourse to the traditional values that classified such acts as abomination, Uzuegbu’s son (one of the warrant chief’s son) is one of such examples.

One of the lead characters in *That Last...* Ejimnaka, laments the ills of colonialism as a thorn in their flesh. She says that “it is like a hot coal coated with fine ashes which the slightest puff of wind whips into instant life” (Ezeigbo, 8). The symbols carefully selected send the image clearly in mind thus imprinting the message deeper on the minds of the listeners.

### The Indigenous Language: A Panacea for Conflict Resolution

Intellectual colonialism has debased its victims to the worst level, putting them into a state of inferiority complex. The clan of Umuga in *The Last...* is not spared either. The nominated warrant chiefs begin to see themselves as colossal lords, feeding fat on the sweat of the people while at the same time helping the whites to trample on the values of their land. Ezeigbo writes that the cause of present conflict is that “Kosiri”, the “alien intruder undermined the culture, the traditional judicial system and economic well being of Umuga” by imposing warrant chiefs on the hitherto free society (9). The warrant chiefs see their cultural values and religion as inferior. They strive to please the whites rather than the people of Umuga.

Otiono reflects that *The Last...* is about the “courageous exploits of Oluada – the leading women organization in concert with Obuofo – the highest decision making body in Umuga to battle Kosiri’s – i.e. whiteman’s - incursion into her society.” It also attempts “to record the history of the war between Umuga and the whiteman ... with the purpose of synthesizing the varied versions of the war story into one dominant version ...” (6).

Ezeigbo in this power packed novel maintains that the meddlers and alien intruders were knocking together the heads of blacks, using “black men to kill black people... yet not one of them was seen in the battle, not one of them fired a shot against anyone in this war. They used us against us...” (141). Therefore the protest of Nigerian writers against the inroads of foreign cultures are entirely within the confines of current human values and aspirations.

Pieterse reflects that since the lines of partition of African (during colonialism) naturally affected the literature of the colonized African societies, each domains found itself voicing the protest and conflict of his place and time. This, he continues, brings about literation of social commitments which dramatizes the conflicts within each community (ix).

Although there are many methods of conflict resolution such as arbitration, courts and tribunals, administration decisions, negotiation and compromise, Umuga opted for their traditional methods. This of course includes the administrative procedure which majored on agreement based on compromise, this invariably failed.

Akpan maintains that there could be conflict without crisis but there certainly cannot be a conceivable crisis without conflict (4). The early part of *The Last* talks about the conflict that arose in Umuga following the incompatibility of interest between the natives and the meddlers-Kosiri. It also highlights the traditional methods of solving it manifestations.

Ekpa has the opinion that conflict resolution is a variety of approaches aimed at terminating conflict through constructive discourse (37). In Ibibio society the proverb “*eto isidaha ikpọọ ikappa akai*” (a tree does not make a forest) underscores the essentiality of unity which is unattainable in a conflict-filled society. Therefore, the Ibibio, like its contemporary African societies, believe in unity and peaceful coexistence as paradigms for development and growth. To the Africans, “a bundle of broom sweeps faster and cleaner” and is uneasily broken like a single broom stick. The issue of unity is one of the paradigms of our millennium goal pursuit. In Ibibio society, conflicts were settled ascendingly from “*idip ete*” (nuclear unit), *ufok* (father’s lineage), *ekpuk* (extended family), *obio*

(village), *oduk* (clan), *ikpaisong* (a conglomerate of clans who claim same descent) ... (Ekpa, 41).

In Igbo society on the other hand, conflicts were settled from the immediate nuclear family, down to the respective gender association (Umuada, Umunna, Oluada) and age grades before transferring same to Obuofo. All these employed the use of proverbial language with their respective laws and enforcement agents. In Igbo society, laws begin with the family group known as Umunna, which is made up of groups of families (Ekpa, 42). It is a fact that Alutaradi and Umuada (association of wives, association of daughters) discuss issues about women rivalry first before taking it to Oluada who tries all it can to kill the conflict. Where this fails, Obuofo comes in, especially when male/ female issue is concerned. For instance, Obuofo, the highest judicial body in Umuga, tried to wade into the feud between Abazu and Onyekozuru for peace to reign.

The failure of the above methods at solving the Umuga – “Kosiri” problem is a manifestation of third stage of colonialism – intellectual colonialism. The existing cold war is escalated due to the zealous treachery of the hired letter writer. This misrepresentation is as a result of the difference in communication apparatus – language. The linguistic difference also affected all African communities that were colonized to date. Today our cultural heritage is gone thanks to colonialism.

The search for peace implies efforts at harmonizing interests. Howard conceives peace as “a creation and maintenance of a just order to any society ...” (quoted in Akpan, 6). For there to be a sustainable peace focus, there must be a discovery of the root cause of the conflict and the conditions for settlement of same. This was the anchor point in the letter of Umuga to Kosiri which Orizu (the hired letter writer) misrepresented. Ezeigbo by this novel tries the traditional method of resolving the tension in the land due to conflict and by this, the persuasive power of proverbs cannot over-emphasized in conflict resolution.

It is only in oral literary expression such as proverbs that a better understanding of human behaviour, value and culture are better expressed. Fashina opines that oral expression has

... the advantage of spontaneous receipt of audience’s comments and pragmatic experience of its aesthetic beauty and delight of its vivid, live and living actions. This kind of genre of arts is, therefore, more likely to produce better understanding of human behaviour, values and culture and invariably, man’s potential resources for technological and scientific advancement... (104).

It is a truism that world peace has been threatened by the very essence of scientific and technological advancement. Fashina’s opinion therefore suggests the “back to root’s” approach to peaceful settlement of any ensuing conflict. What better mode of dialogue and communication do we have than “the terseness and charm” with which proverbs are known? (Okpewho, 226).

In order that Nigerian languages fulfill the purpose of conflict resolution, there has to exist a strong bond between culture and language. This bond will enhance understanding of issues and contribute constructively towards peaceful settlement of conflicts. African culture and its cultural values have more relevance

with proverbial expressions to which Nigeria is no exception. The rich proverbs of Nigerian languages have always and will always have a strong basis for conflict resolutions and by extension, establish durable peace.

Fashina in his article “Lit-Orature Development, World Peace and the Challenges of Literary Theory/Criticism” asserts that:

... the uniqueness of literature as creative recreations of life records are best appreciated via a miscegenation of reading or textual approaches which do not suspend our traditional codes of reasoning and of solving problems... Oral performance allows for modifications and variations, thereby negating the notion of... fixed binary opposition postulated by the structuralists (112).

He concludes that with the recognition of written literature and folklore as one unit – “Lit-Orature”, the world is sure to move in the direction of balanced cultural and technological development which will promote world peace and harmony. He insists on the recognition of our traditional modes of addressing conflicts and general human endeavours. We cannot thus run away from our ancient oral modes of communication as paradigms for peace and conflict resolution.

### **Peace & Conflict Resolution in Akachi Ezeigbo’s *The Last of the Strong Ones***

There is no denying that African writings – novels, drama and poetry – overtime have been trying to address issues on conflict resolution be it political, religious, economic or otherwise. Though early writers like Achebe, Tutuola, Nwapa, Amadi, among others tried to project African culture in its naivety and beauty, the underlying factor remains that of resolving one aspect of conflict or the other. For instance Tutuola’s *The Palm Drinkard* tries to portray interpersonal conflict about life and certain phenomena around man; Nwapa’s *Efuru* and Amadi’s *The Concubine* set to resolve the conflict between man and the powers of the gods over man’s destiny; Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* dwell on resolving political conflicts which result from inter cultural clash, whose main intent was “to subjugate where possible, eliminate” the African culture (Amadi, 3).

Because of the dehumanizing effects of colonialism where the invading culture almost succeeded in displacing the African values, each up coming writer seeks to establish that Africa “had a way of life as rich and a worldview as coherent as anybody’s. Ezeigbo writes that “Umuga had a rich history full of heroism as well as anybody’s” (1-2). To this end writers present issues that border on Africanness.

When we talk of African writings, we invariably mean the expression of African’s sensibilities and of course, our experiences over the years constitute one of such. Experiences cannot be said to reflect Africanism if it does not highlight such issues as our crude old days that the whites termed “barbaric”, the colonial subjugated era as well as the present era of stench, arising from corruption and political thuggery, all of which are resultant effects of former. With this in mind writers reflect issues like rituals, which is a fundamental issue of religious sacrifices among others in their works. It is pertinent to note that important aspects



of culture include religion, arts, rituals and myths. All these are reflected in one African literary work or the other.

With the coming of the new cultural order, there is bound to be some form of clash since the invading culture came not with “white chalk” for peace, but rather with the intent of “defecating” in our obi and even slapping the household owner (Achebe, *Arrow*). Akachi Ezeigbo in her masterpiece, *The Last of the Strong Ones*, highlights this clash clearly, stressing the sense of haunting fear that engulfs the people of Umuga in the wake of conflicting cultures. In her sentence in the novel, she stresses that “all was not well with the land” (1). This is a clear case of conflict. A once peaceful land becomes tense because of the uncertainty in the air about the infiltrations. The peace and tranquility with which the six villages which make up Umuga was known hitherto, is greatly threatened.

Elechi Amadi says that the displacement of one culture by another is a traumatic experience which can generate very strong reactions from the invaded culture if and when it is in a position to speak out. Such an imposition always threatens the identity of a people or race. This is the “horrifying spectre” which the people of Umuga do not want to put up with. Ezeigbo thus reflects the traditional methods of conflict resolution in Umuga in the wake of this nightmare.

*The Last of the Strong Ones* bares the law making process of the traditional African society and goes on to emphasize that this “dark continent” had always had a way of life rich, representative, smooth and coherent as any other culture of the world. In Umuga as well as any African society noted for her deep sense of oratory, group gathering is not a strange phenomenon. There existed the Oluada and Umunna in addition to Umuada, each with its specific role which are harmonized at the Obuofo. For instance, Oluada was the representative voice of the women selected on merit, chastity and virtue. Umuada was an association of all daughters of the land. They addressed issues of women conflict such as co-wife rivalry, quarrels between mothers-in-laws and daughters-in-law, sisters-in-law as well as general women feud and the injustices meted out on women by their husbands. Umunna on the other hand was a patrilineal group which discusses the affairs of men in general. The central judicial system of Umuga was Obuofo, the inner council committee, which drew its members from Umunna and Oluada to adjudicate issues of the land peaceably. People with questionable character or immoral status were not admitted into Obuofo. Having identified conflicts in the land, discussions open with intention of a peaceful resolution of same.

In every gathering in Africa, the key word for persuasive discussion hangs on the ability to relate the issues clearly. It is a well-known fact that African languages make use of proverbs as the best and most effective instrument of communication, since the writer and the society interact together all the time. Proverbs serve as a means of reconfirming the beauty and complexity that language displays when used. Proverbs are the strong point in Nigerian English in that “they say with sometimes brutal brevity, what may otherwise involve long explanation (Amadi, 52). Chinua Achebe, a well-known exponent and user of proverbs, believes that every writer should “design a new English, still in full communion with the ancestral home, but altered to suit its new African surrounding (quoted in Amadi, 52). Proverbs comprise imagery which are common to the users and listeners, which in turn enforce clarity on the issues related in the utterance.



For any move towards peace and conflict resolution to be meaningful, there has to be clear terms of communication. One basic tool for effective communication is the use of proverbs. Just like the writer does not write in a vacuum but what he interacts with within the society, effective communication requires the use of analogous and familiar concepts for the message to be properly grounded. The need to therefore bring the discussions close to the Umuga surrounding requires ample use of proverbs and symbolic language. This Ezeigbo exploits effectively in high profusion, because proverbs which are used to spice up conversation, leave a lasting impression on the minds of its hearers than ordinary straight-jacketed speech.

Ezeigbo in this novel says that “those who bring home ant-ridden faggots must be prepared for the visit of lizard.” (9). This underscores that the choice that one makes decides his predicaments in life. The four warrant chiefs of “Kosiri” disobeyed their master by being absent at court sessions in Awka. Their punishment is compared to that of slaves since in their previous capacity as family heads, it was unheard of that they would be asked to go fetching water from Obibia stream or any source for that matter. In their present position as “Kosiri’s” oppressive instruments, the people refuse to sympathize the turn in their fortune. Therefore, the “ant-ridden faggots” they have brought has reduced them vulnerable to visits by lizards. What a striking comparison of their fates.

Similarly, when the excesses of the disposed warrant chiefs – Uzuegbu, Onyirioha, Okwara and Ozigbo – were reported along with their treacherous plans on Umuga and Obuofa had to take a firm decision on how to deal decisively with “Kosiri” and their so called warrant chiefs, the proceeding of the gathering were richly spiced with appropriate proverbs. Ezeigbo compares their greed and excesses as the proverbial “man, carrying a huge elephant carcass and at the same time trying to catch a cricket with his leg”. She concludes that “they are victims of the leprosy of greed” (13-15). The author relates that Umuga has enough that her child should be contented with, hence there is nothing in trying to betray her to serve the intruders against their land, people and gods.

While the Obuofa were discussing the treachery committed against them by their letter-writer, Orizu, many proverbs were used too, (from Obiatu reporting on his journey to Awka, to the feud between Abazu and Onyekozuru) to relate their experiences. Obiatu said that “he who tells the story bears the burden, not the hearer” (55). This means that he has the burden on him with a duty to relieve himself by off-loading this burden, therefore, his listeners should listen patiently. Similarly, his puzzle about “Kosiri’s” silence after delivering the peace treaty is demystified when their informant came to reveal the true content of the letter which is detrimental to their cause. Nnaji says “that explains the attitude of Kosiri. I now understand... ‘A toad does not run in the middle of the day without cause’ (57). Onyekozuru says that “when a commoner wants to criticize a king, he must wear the disguise of a masquerade (60). The proverbial utterance indicates the acceptable traditional norms of communication in this society, stressing that the youth should maintain a mark of respect to the elders. In this situation Onyekozuru is willing to bear the consequences of criticizing a king without the mask of masquerade because of the extent of her anger which arises from Abazu’s false accusation of treachery on her.

Also when Okorie and Mbgeke, Chieme's mother, had a face-off and there arose a need for settlement whereby relations from both the husband's and wife's sides were invited, another proverb came up: "the pumpkin stem that is left untended creeps into excrement." Okorie has established that his wife's assertive nature is as a result of lack of control so he intends to do just that. He reminds her that "I am your husband and you must not forget that. I am the one to make all the decisions in this house. You are growing wings. Your duty is to obey." (68) Even when he has not always there to make the decisions or contribute meaningfully to the intellectual and material well being of his household, such decisions had to wait for him. Africans believe in communality. Members of one's extended family must be present in any conflict resolution process. This in itself is an avenue to broker peace because the party feels a sense of confidence and security if relatives are present.

Even when the clan finally resolves to face the war that "Kosiri" was mounting on them, solemn discussions still had to be held severally by the Obufo to decide on their strategies. It is therefore obvious that proverbs, which flourish in solemn discussions, had a field day. Although the conflict matured into crisis which left the town desolate as a result of "subordination to the will of the stronger party (Akpan, 13), it did not dispute the fact that processes were formulated at resolving the conflict.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has carefully appraised the key issues it sets out to treat. It has delved on conflict and what it means, what is required to restrain it as well as peace and its features. It has tried to x-ray African methods of peace and conflict resolution which is tenable in the use of language found in solemn discussions, with particular reference to the proverbs. The paper further highlighted instances of use of proverbs in Ezeigbo's *The Last* in order to resolve crisis. Finally, the paper talked about crisis management strategies in a typical African society.

It is the opinion of this paper that although colonialism has brought about changes in African society, both positive and negative, Africans have a duty to filter the positive things she learnt from the whites. On this note, this paper does not call for a rejection of the influence of other cultures but rather suggests that we could use a multiplicity of cultures by imbibing the strong and developmental features of these cultures while at the same time retaining ours. It advocates the African's belief that "both the eagle and the kite should perch." It further believes that in this polluted, hungry and materialist world, we could harness our strong moral values alongside what we have learnt from other cultures, to provide a strong base for our development. This paper concludes that. If a society wishes to grow, it must not forget that language, which is a key instrument in dialogue, must be exploited maximally to achieve understanding between contending forces. Africans should therefore realize the intricacies of our glorious past for a rebirth of spiritual, economical, social and political concepts. This will provide solution to the present, thereby helping us to confidently contemplate the future.

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## 23. Nigerian Languages and Conflict Resolution: The Case for Proverbs and Figurative Expressions

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The fall of the Babel Tower<sup>1</sup> might have led to our diverse views that consequently breed differences, which oftentimes lead to conflicts. Though there might not be a return to the pre-Babelian *super-tongue*, government policies might be used as channels via which peace-friendly policies can be tailored to provide means of establishing sustainable peace and understanding among people with different cultures and worldviews. Among the many approaches for achieving this, the linguistic one seems to be overlooked. It is thus proposed that proverbs from the different ethnic groups in the country be integrated into the educational curriculum because it is believed that their teaching will bring about a comprehensive understanding of other culture's history, values and worldviews. The method needs not require learners to learn the languages from which the proverbs are taken, for that will be impracticable in a country with over 300 languages. Rather, they are to learn from translations and contextual explications of the proverbs. It can as well involve including proverbs as topics in subjects like social studies or literature. The paper reveals that proverbs encapsulate ideals and worldviews that can be taught learners, so that they understand and appreciate the rich and diverse cultures in Nigeria. It is concluded that more than the teaching of the three major languages recommended by the curriculum, the proposed approach should be preferable because the assorted proverbs to be employed will be national in nature; hence, will have far-reaching effects in guaranteeing the inculcation of virtues that would create the much-needed national peace and unity.

### Introduction

Conflict, in whatever form, is a bane to any attempt at *national integration* - a situation in which citizens of a country consider themselves as one people bound by shared historical experiences and similar traditional values. Such a situation will be one in which they are imbued with the spirit of patriotism and unity which outstrips any established, primordial conflict-ridden tendencies. It represents a strategy of creating unity in diversity that can be regarded as one way through which social conflicts can be evaded. In Nigeria, there have been policies by the authorities aimed at national integration and conflict resolution but most of these, according to Jega (2001), gradually move from attempts to forge unity in diversity to aggressive moves by successive military regimes to ignore socio-cultural

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Old Testament (Genesis 11:1-9) a tower erected on the plain of Shinar in Babylonia by descendants of Noah. The builders intended the tower to reach to heaven; their presumption, however, angered Yahweh, who interrupted construction by causing among them a previously unknown confusion of languages. He then scattered these people, speaking different languages, all over the world. *The fall of the Babel Tower* is used here for *our different tongues*

differences and impose uniformity in spite of the multiplicity of cultures in the country. The result is that the more acute the discrepancies become, the more conflicts erupted thereby creating more obstacles to unity, peaceful coexistence, progress and stable development. Thus, one can agree with Jega, (2001) that genuine national integration can begin when Nigerians realize that unity implies accepting, respecting and tolerating differences notwithstanding socio-cultural miscellany. In this regard then, it can be argued that what governments fail to achieve with political policies might be achieved linguistically, in this case with proverbs.

### **The Proverb**

Meanings in language can be created and conveyed literally, by the use of everyday denotative language, or figuratively, through symbolic representation of entities and abstractions. The latter is made possible with linguistic forms such as proverbs, idioms and figures of speech. In addition to been mainly metaphoric, they contain references to the socio-cultural milieu and folk wisdom of a community. The proverb is however the most popular of these expressions and therefore will be focus of the paper.

A proverb can be described as a concise, familiar phrase or sentence in a given language that contains advice about life which can serve as a commentary on social practices of a people. It contains what can be termed *folk wisdom*, which derives from evaluations and observations of happenings in a society; particularly culture-specific generalizations arrived at after observing a particular social practice (Bhuvaneswar, 2004). As such, it may only be properly understood in the context of the society from which it comes. In relation to this, Mieder (1985) defines the proverb as:

... a short generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation (Mieder, 1985:119).

The metaphoricity of the proverb makes it resemble other figurative expressions. Due to this, and the fact that both reflect the culture of a people, the idiom and proverb are sometimes indistinguishable in African languages. However, the proverb remains a unique form because it is identified by the *wisdom* expressed in it, rather than its linguistic form. No matter the number of terms used for it, however, its importance lies in it been a source of wisdom, advice as well as a catalogue of socio-historical and cultural legacy of a people.

### **Socio-Cultural Values of Proverbs**

Proverbs, and some figurative expressions, are intrinsically related to culture and consequently reflect and safeguard a society's way of life. As a preserver of culture, the proverb is valuable because it incorporates material, social and ideological features of a culture such as technology; forms of social organization, values, beliefs and morals which are coded and passed down as tradition. As such, so long as there are speakers of the language, their culture lives in their speech. Thus, teaching students these proverbs in essence means teaching them the history,



culture and beliefs of the people, what most part of the social studies syllabus tries to do. In fact, teaching/learning diversity of cultures is indispensable for the human species to thrive for, according to Pogson, (1998:4), *if we are to prosper, we need cross-fertilisation of thought that multilingualism gives us*. In our case, we can do with multilingually-derived-proverbs.

Though proverbs can be studied in order to understand the way of life of a people, they can as well be studied or taught on their own as rationalizations of reflective observations of social life, human values and natural phenomena. In this case, they will reveal distinctive worldviews from different societies, a piece of knowledge that can be used in making points about practical needs of traditional noble virtues in modern societies-especially as they pertain to cherishing peace, encouraging cooperation, preaching love and general good will to all humanity. Through beliefs expressed in proverbs, for instance, learners will get to *understand* how the world works and this would determine their responses to the actions of others as well as to natural phenomena around them. The important point here is that when proverbs are integrated into a teaching scheme, learners would not feel alienated from the subject as the focus of the proverbs are realistic, down-to-earth aspects of existence such as domestic life [marriage, birth] health matters [diseases, remedies, death], emotions [happiness, sadness, anger, worry] and interpersonal relationships [love, hate, cooperation, hospitality] among others. In addition, values expressed in the proverbs would help them distinguish between right/good/acceptable and wrong/bad/taboo as well as provide them with aspirations in their lives. Thus, the proverb becomes, at least in the African context, a kind of tradition which:

... distils the essence of human experience. Performers of these oral forms take ancient images and shape them into spoken texts that influence audiences in contemporary societies (Scheub, 2005).

Thus, traditional forms [proverbs, folklore, oral poetry] can be relevant to attempts at conflict resolution because they reflect worldviews which symbolize and distinguish a community from others. Ezejideaku (2003), for instance, agrees that proverbs represent the worldview of a society. Similarly, Yusuf and Mathangwane, (2003) concur that proverbs are basically stratagems for dealing with situations because they enable one develop a deep understanding of issues and problems and at the same time serve as guidance on how to behave and relate to others in the society. On this, it would be pertinent to refer to the proposition that there is an epistemological basis for the use of proverbs to control and shape a people's view of life (Petrova, 2003). Thus, the methodological/theoretical basis of the paper will involve examining proverbs as cultural texts based on the concept of the *linguocultural* level of language and the *cultureme* as their basic structural unit (Petrova, 2003:160); that is, by seeing language, culture and proverbs as interrelated entities. This interrelationship makes proverbs potential candidates for enhancing cohesion among people and hence forestalling likely conflicts. This can be achieved by integrating the teaching of proverbs in the educational curriculum.



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**Educational Policy and Conflict Resolution**

Attempts at creating policies on language in education in Nigeria, according to Brann (1977b), have been tied to the search for a truly integrative policy that would unify the various ethnic groups and cultural traditions in the country. This started after the civil war that brought home to the government the realisation that there is the need for an *integrative* policy in education. It is in response to this that the report of the national curriculum conference of September 1969 formulated the desire for the integration of language education in the national curriculum. One of the outcomes of this was the introduction of the teaching of the three major languages. On this, the NPE specifically states:

In addition to appreciating the importance of language in the educational process and as a means of preserving the people's culture, the government considers it in the interest of national unity for each child to learn one of the three major languages in addition to his own mother tongue. In this connection, the government considers the three major languages in Nigeria to be Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba (Section 1, page 9, Paragraph 8, National Policy on Education, 1981)

The goals of teaching/learning languages as spelt out in the NPE (1981) include preservation of culture and the creation of a virile and united nation. There is thus the need for Nigerian linguists and language educators to do research in language that will lead to the realisation of this national aspiration. The teaching of proverbs is important in this regard because it will serve as one means of realistically learning about the multiplicity of values from the various ethnic groups in the country and of fostering unity that will lead to the resolution of the incessant conflicts plaguing the country. This is especially made pertinent by the fact that the teaching of just three languages cannot serve as a means of preserving the cultures of about 400 other groups (Emenanjo, 1985) and may even be seen as a discriminative policy which can lead to misgivings that could result in conflicts. In addition, it is impracticable to accommodate more than 400 languages in a teaching scheme. Thus, in the proposed scheme, proverbs and other expressions from all over the country, with relevant ones from other parts of the continent, should be taught in the English language, which will, it is believed, ensure a greater level of understanding of the expressions. The expressions can as well be integrated into stories or used to draw out simple drama plots that can be acted. This scheme means that every group will literally have its *representative expression*, and by extension its values and worldviews, reflected in the national curriculum. These would eventually form part of a truly national heritage that Nigerians would be proud of and which will bring mutual trust among them.

**Proverbial Virtues and Worldviews**

Conflicts in the polity can be avoided when the proverbs are used as tools for teaching positive values such as tolerance and brotherhood. One way this can be done is through contextual explication of proverbial themes. For example, translations of all proverbs related to various spheres of life from different Nigerian ethnic groups can be collected, categorised and their literal translations given. It should be noted that what is actually required in this case is not their

verbatim meanings but rather their themes and propositional meanings which, when appropriately explicated, will show that there is universality in some virtues and as well reveal the peace, love, honesty and other positive conducts preached in proverbs. Specifically then, they can be grouped according to predominant themes and commentaries on them given in the first instance. Subsequently, they can be used as points to be used to buttress issues raised in literature or social studies lessons. They may come in handy in other lessons as well. For example, in the course of teaching Nigerian history it can be argued that it is not right to present the history in the edited-report-like form found in history books. Rather, what really happened in the war should be first related to the learners in the form of an allegorical story based on proverbs like:

1. "A fight between grasshoppers is a joy to the crow." Lesotho (A1)
2. "When the brothers fight to the death, a stranger inherits their father's estate." Igbo proverb A3
3. "He who hates, hates himself." Zulu proverb (A4)
4. "He that forgives gains the victory." Hausa (A10)

Proverb 1, for instance, when well explicated, can bring home to students the fact that war or conflict is really in nobody's interest as it gives room for alien forces to take advantage of our strife. Allegorically, *if you {grasshoppers} destroy each others house {fight} the bricklayer {the crow} will be happy because both of you will come to him for bricks to rebuild your houses*. At the end, both fighters are losers. When such points are made, then the *official version* of the history as found in the teaching texts can be presented. However, questions on and discussions of that should be based on proverbs like the ones above so that, for example in a test, the teacher can ask a question like: With reference to the Nigerian civil war, discuss the proverbial wisdom in the Hausa proverb: *He that forgives gains the victory* and the Igbo proverb *When the brothers fight to the death, a stranger inherits their father's state*.

Such a question gives the students a chance to reflect on the historical genesis of the nation and the *mistakes* made in the polity. Indeed, it can be argued that the continuous crises and conflicts we are witnessing today stems partly from the fact that there is no genuine attempt to make such matters realistic to learners. The practice has been to present the *fact* as if it is something that happened in fiction, something that has no bearing on their lives. Thus, to really manage and curtail conflicts, there is the need to show that socio-historical issues have a direct impact on our present.

In the sections below, a number of proverbs (from Nigeria and other countries in Africa) are explicated to demonstrate that their themes are relevant to the issue of conflict management and resolution and hence can be used to make points about it. Note that seemingly remote themes of some of the proverbs are in fact more related to our subject than those with direct references to war, conflict or crisis. The grouping into two is just for convenience as some of the themes may actually overlap.

### **Peace, Love and Hospitality in Proverbs**

Peace is not just the absence of war or conflict but also the absence of any misgiving and the maintenance of an uninterrupted harmonious co-existence

among people in a community. Traditional folk wisdom cherishes this virtue so much that proverbs from all over the country and Africa encourage it. The Nilotic<sup>2</sup> proverb *we will water the thorn for the sake of the rose*, for example, can be interpreted as saying however long and tortuous {thorn}, the way to love/goodness/peace, one is urged to follow it {water it} because there will always be a good that will result from it {rose}. The point to note here is the great importance attached peace – especially the strong desire to pursue it that the proverb expresses.

Love and peace are related because the former leads to friendship and understanding – things whose presence is a sure sign that there is no strife, no hard feeling and hence a place is provided for peace to grow and yield its fruits, of which unity is one. The reverse is also possible for peace can lead to love. For example, when members of a community insist on maintaining peace despite reasons for the contrary, the other, possibly aggravated group, can calm down and reconsider the justification of conflict when there is an option for peace. Thus, the proverbial peace maker may remind them of the *proverbial fact* that “*If you can’t resolve your problems in peace, you can’t solve war.*” (A8) and that if you insist on war, then you should know that “*When brothers fight to the death, a stranger inherits their father’s estate.*” (A3) and that “*A fight between grasshoppers is a joy to the crow.*” (A1) The realisation of the futility of conflict, as expressed in this proverb, may then begin to dawn on the two parties, especially when the reality of the fact that “*As long as fire stays in one’s breast, it does not cool down.*” (A7) is pointed out to them. In addition, the drudgery involved in battling each other is emphasised as something that will lead to a situation in which “*The chaser and the one who is chased get tired.*” (A9) Thus, if at last the parties understand and practicalise the saying that “*He that forgives gains the victory.*” (A10), then both would rush to be the first to *bury the hatchet*.

In addition to preaching peace, there are proverbs that reiterate the importance of friendship as a means of ensuring peace in a society. This is because in the absence of war and the presence of a sustained peace, friendship develops. In a multi-cultural and multi-ideological state like Nigeria, friendship in the real sense of the word can be a resource that can be harnessed for national integration. Thus, when all Nigerians, despite ethnic or religious difference, regard other Nigerians as friends, and at the same time believe and use advises in folk sayings like “*A friend is someone you share the path with.*” (A6) and also that a friend can be “*... a water source....*” (A 28), they would come to realise that it is a folly to fight a fellow Nigerian because that will be akin to rocking the boat. In cases where conflicts have planted hatred and mistrust among people, proverbs can still be used as instruments for healing wounds. In addition, they can serve as catalysts in conflict resolution and in preventing their future occurrences. The clash of interests that leads to conflict, be it economic, political or ideological, should lead to the realization that “*If there is cause to hate someone, the cause to love has just*

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<sup>2</sup> Largest of the six subgroups of Nilo-Saharan language family spoken along the Nile and Chari rivers. It includes languages like Luo, Maasai and Nubian. Others are spoken in Chad, Ethiopia, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic.

*begun.*" (A26) Nigerians can thus learn to be partners in matters such as trade and friends in social occasions and communities. And for any group that happens to gain something, it should note that it need not "... *give some of ... {its} possessions... {but can} give some of {its} heart.*" (A27) This is showing that being kind to others is more important than offering them material things.

Hospitality is a virtue most Nigerians are known for. This can be attested to by the presence of many references to it in traditional sayings reflecting what really obtains in Nigerian communities. It is important to reveal to the youths that other people are kind, hospitable and thus trustworthy. For instance, it can be said that the very essence of African hospitality is epitomised in the proverb "*A guest is a gift, a thief a tragedy.*" (A29) It can be used to drive home the importance attached to hospitality because *gift* here represents a token of affection, recognition and good will and thus can touch the heart of people. The metaphorical reference of the guest as a gift shows the high regard accorded guests. The meaning conveyed in this and similar expressions, however, goes beyond giving prominence to hospitality. It emphasises the need to show goodness and extend the hand of friendship to others wherever they come from. Two things realizable from this expression are, first, it shows that if a guest would be so considered, then a stranger from another ethnic group will as well be accommodated. The Hausa expression, "*spreading of the face is better than the spreading of the mat*" [literally] (A24) (Meaning: cheerfulness is a better welcome than an offer of seat) reiterates the point about hospitality and in a way, indirectly points to the way hospitality is cherished in that community. Though on the surface mere cordiality [spreading of the face] seems to be placed above hospitality [spreading of mat], it is not really the case because the expression carries another meaning derived from the economic life of the Hausa people. This is the fact that there are a lot of people with very low incomes that in reality want to be hospitable but their economic dispositions make it impossible. Thus, the proverbial guide is implying that even though being hospitable is very good and encouraged, if one does not have the wherewithal to entertain a guest, one should at the least show cordiality. In other words, what matters is not what one offers but one's openness and acceptance of fellow humans. One is made to remember that it is a great virtue to warmly welcome visitors even if they are not well entertained.

The Swahili proverb further reiterates the importance of visitors in the saying: *Let the guest come so that the host or hostess may benefit (get well).* (A30) The guest is believed to bring many blessings to a home. Part of the tradition expressed in this saying is the big meal of welcome, perhaps killing a chicken or a goat to make a feast for the guest. The other traditional practice is that visitors themselves do not usually visit empty handed. Gifts are brought for the host or hostess and the family members. These usually need not be expensive for they serve as stated above, as symbolic tokens of good will.

In the Nilotic proverb "*If you have a lot, give some of your possessions; if you have little; give some of your heart.*" (A27) the point about gift as a symbolic token of love and good is reiterated. Compared with A24 one may see the one reason the Hausa expression offers an alternative for entertaining the guest. Therefore, the proverbial advice here is that if someone visits and brings along a gift, of say one orange, it should be accepted because "*One does not love if one does not accept from others.*" (A25) it should be reiterated here that when these



interpretations of the proverbs are well explained in a contextualised form, it will entrench the love of others in students as well as other people and that is a great means of fostering friendship and hence curtailing conflict.

### A. Folk Philosophy of Life

The proverb is said to be the repertoire of people's cultural as well as social wisdom (Finnegan, 1970; Mbiti, 1988; Summer 1995 Seluba 2002, Hussein, 2005). It is thus used to make points about all sorts of issues related to life in a community. Most important is the fact that they can function as succinct means of conveying complex thoughts, feelings or ideas. In addition, proverbs reveal the linguistic acumen of the language speakers of old because a closer look at the sayings shows a combination of insight, sometimes-empirical observations of the flora, fauna and human psychology. Sometimes, however, what is presented as *wise* may not look so – especially to the modern audience who fail to realise that there are deep-rooted socio-cultural and historical explanations below the surface presentation of the proverbs. In spite of this, there are still a lot to be learnt from this sub group that can help in realizing the goal of conflict prevention. A few examples of how this is possible are shown below.

The importance of obedience to authority and seeking of counsel are reiterated in some proverbs. These can be sources of political inspiration or guidance to youths as well as leaders of communities and can really help in reducing cases of conflict in our country. For example, the saying "*It is better to have no law than not enforcing it.*" (B23) is not advocating for a lawless society but is rather emphasising the importance of following regulations or, in current Nigerian political idiom, adhering to **due process**. It is common knowledge that disregard of constituted laws and regulations has been the cause of most of the socio-economic problems plaguing the country. Sometimes, crises and conflicts arise because people do not listen to authority which they perceive as corrupt or unjust and therefore not worthy of being obeyed. Absence of a feeling of respect for constituted authority can lead to civil disobedience of different sorts. But this can be avoided if the proverbial suggestions on the matter are taken seriously. For instance, the saying "*Who listens to the voice of the elderly is like a strong tree; who turns a deaf ear is like a twig in the wind.*" (B24) is advocating obedience to authority. Since governments usually discourage conflict, it then follows that if people are obedient to authority, there will be no conflicts. This, among other things, can mean shunning corrupt practices, which is one thing the government [*the elderly?*] is persistently telling or warning the citizens to eschew. Thus, it is important to know that "... *the elderly knows the road.*" (B15) and so it is important to follow them in order not to get lost.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that though there are many efforts by the government to pre-empt conflicts in the country they are not yielding the desired effect as is testifiable by the incessant socio-religious conflicts in the country. Attempts at finding lasting solution to these should continuous. The teaching of proverbial themes and meanings in formal educational settings, it is proposed, is one approach that will help towards reaching that goal. In particular, it is revealed that since the themes of most proverbs contain valuable counsel and observations on

different spheres of life, they can form the basis of teaching topics in subjects like history, literature and social studies – especially at the primary and secondary levels. Integrated as themes for discussing socio-cultural and historical issues, they are shown to be rich sources of lessons to be learnt on the negative effects of conflict as well as advices to be given concerning conflict management. We cannot wait until conflicts emerge before we start thinking of ways to tackle them. Since proverbs contain virtues that are useful for imbuing in learners self respect and the need to avoid confrontation, it is proposed that the contents of proverbs should be taught as they can ease the transmission to learners of values that show the need for a conflict-free society. The Yoruba expression “*A proverb is the horse which can carry one swiftly to the discovery of ideas.*” buttresses the fact that proverbs are linguistic forms that can encapsulate complex meanings and simplify ideas and thus are very useful in teaching culture and other aspects of life.

Among other things, the contextualization of the themes of proverbs would teach learners that it is not a virtue to be self-centred but that cooperating with all and sundry is beneficial for both personal and national development. As for the long term entrenchment of virtues and ideas that will ensure sustainable peace, proverbs advocating peace, love, friendship and hospitality are examined because it is believed that we cannot hope to prevent occurrence of conflict if there is no love and understanding among the various ethnic groups in the country. Thus, when the contents of the expressions with these themes are used as teaching material, they will facilitate the drive for national integration, which in essence means most of the conflicts disrupting the progress of the nation would be a thing of the past.

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## Appendix

### A. Proverbs with Themes of Peace, Love and Hospitality

1. "A fight between grasshoppers is a joy to the crow." Lesotho
2. "The tortoise adorned itself with hard shells but its neck is bare so that relatives might touch him. Idoma
3. "When the brothers fight to the death, a stranger inherits their father's estate." Ibo proverb
4. "He who hates, hates himself." Zulu proverb
5. "When the webs of the spider join, they can trap a lion." (Ethiopian proverb)
6. "A friend is someone you share the path with". - (Nilotic proverb)
7. "As long as fire stays in one's breast, it does not cool down." Ethiopia
8. "If you can't resolve your problems in peace, you can't solve war." – Somalia
9. "The chaser and the one who is chased get tired." Kikuyu, Kenya
10. "He that forgives gains the victory." Hausa
11. "When teeth bite the tongue, it is not the case of hatred" - Chamba
12. "We will water the thorn for the sake of the rose." Kanem proverb
13. "We should put out fire while it is still small." Kalenjin (Kenya)
14. Words can kill before arms. Nilotic proverb.
15. "Remember, after the storm there will be a rainbow." (Nilotic proverb)
16. "A sandstorm passes; the stars remain." (Nilotic proverb)
17. "Harsh words hurt more than a poisonous arrow". (Nilotic proverb)
18. "The pillar of the world is hope." Kanuri proverb,
19. "To be happy in one's home is better than to be a chief." Yoruba,
20. Look for a black goat while it is still daytime (Igbo).
21. The man who has bread to eat does not appreciate the severity of a famine." Yoruba proverb
22. "One falsehood spoils a thousand truths." Ashanti proverb
23. "He who treats you as himself does you no injustice." Lon proverb
24. Spreading of the face is better than the spreading of the mat. (Cheerfulness is better welcome than an offer of seat. When a person is warmly welcomed though not well entertained.) Hausa
25. "One does not love if one does not accept from others." Kanuri proverb
26. "If there is cause to hate someone, the cause to love has just begun." Wolof proverb, Senegal.
27. "If you have a lot, give some of your possessions; if you have little; give some of your heart." - (Nilotic proverb)
28. "A friend is like a water source for a long journey." (Nilotic proverb)
29. "A guest is a gift, a thief a tragedy." (Nilotic proverb)
30. Let the guest come so that the host or hostess may benefit [get well]. (Swahili)

### B. Proverbs Expressing Folk Philosophy

1. "Hold a true friend with both hands." (Kanuri proverb)
2. "Working in the fields is hard, but hunger is harder." (Nilotic proverb)
3. "Every man leaves his footprints." - (Nilotic proverb)
4. "A father without sons is like a bow without arrows." (Nilotic proverb)
5. "A pilgrim, even if a sultan, is poor" (Nilotic proverb)
6. "A mother's tenderness for her children is as discreet as the dew that kisses the earth." - (Nilotic proverb)
7. "There is more wisdom in listening than in speaking." (Nilotic proverb)
8. "A friend works in the light of the sun, an enemy in the dark." (Nilotic proverb)
9. "No matter how early one awakes, the sun does not rise first." (Nilotic proverb)

10. "The hunter knows his prey." (Nilotic proverb)
11. "The wisdom of the elderly is like the sun, it illuminates the village and the great river." - (Nilotic proverb)
12. An undecided man is the worst disaster of the village. Nilotic proverb.
13. A generous man must eat if he wants to continue to be one. Nilotic proverb.
14. A village without elderly is like a tree without roots. Nilotic proverb
15. The youth walks faster than the elderly but the elderly knows the road. – Nilotic proverb
16. Who does not know the path should ask. Nilotic proverb.
17. 'Hunger makes the big fish come out of hiding in the great river.' Nilotic proverb.
18. 'The venomous snake cannot be seen in the Savannah.' Nilotic proverb.
19. 'You cannot handle fire with your hands.' Kanuri proverb
20. 'Do not insult a crocodile while your feet are still in the water'. (Nilotic proverb)
21. "A man with too much ambition cannot sleep in peace." African
22. "Disease and disasters come and go like rain, but health is like the sun that illuminates the entire village." (Luo proverb)
23. "It is better to have no law than not enforcing it." (Bantu proverb)
24. "Who listens to the voice of the elderly is like a strong tree; who turns a deaf ear is like a twig in the wind." (Nilotic proverb)
25. "Equality is difficult, but superiority is painful." - (Serere proverb)
26. "Who does not choose dies of hunger". (Arab proverb)
27. "The thoughts of the wise are like stars in the galaxy: never ending." (North African)
28. "Do not wait until tomorrow to hunt." (Nilotic proverb)
29. "Those who waste time only hurt themselves." (North African proverb)
30. Having little knowledge is like having your hands tied around your neck [like a slave] (Hausa).

### **C. Proverbs on General Folk Wisdom**

1. "Blind belief is dangerous." Luyia, Western Kenya
2. "A tree not taller than an ant cannot shade you." Kanuri proverb, Nigeria
3. "That man's a fool whose sheep flees twice." Oji proverb.
4. "Hold a true friend with both hands." - Kanuri proverb, Nigeria
5. "Evil penetrates like a needle and then becomes like an oak tree." – (Ethiopian proverb)
6. "The drums of war are the drums of hunger." (South African proverb)
7. "The hunter that speaks too much, goes home empty handed." (Nilotic proverb)
8. "Equality is difficult, but superiority is painful." (Serere proverb)
9. "A person who never travels, believes his mother's cooking is the best in the world". (Kiganda proverb)
10. "Between imitation and envy, imitation is better". (Ekonda proverb, Democratic Republic of Congo)
11. "The villager who always complains and is never satisfied with anything is like an annoying flea on he foot." (Nilotic proverb)
12. "Where the cattle does not graze, the warriors pass." (Nilotic proverb)
13. "The voyager's path is marked by the stars and not the sand dunes" (Nilotic proverb)
14. "Only the feet of the voyager know the path". (Nilotic proverb)
15. "A friend is like a source of water during a long voyage". (Nilotic proverb).

## 24. Speech Acts Interaction with Cohesive Ties

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The main thrust of this paper is to show that cohesive elements play some role in bringing out the fact that speech acts, within a discourse, do relate with one another. The paper shows further to show that the impact of the concept of cohesion on the decoding of the speech acts contained in a text is such that it is only if and when the cohesively related items contained in the text are successfully interpreted that the appropriate speech acts can be properly understood. The texts under investigation in this paper are some public-service advertisements placed on the radio in Nigeria.

### **Introduction**

Public-service advertising is a kind of advertising outside the product/service realm. Unlike consumer advertisements which contain what the consumers want to hear or do, public-service advertisements contain what government or other authorities want the people to hear or do (cf. Ude 1996). Public-service advertisements are used by the government or other authorities to convey particular/specific messages designed to achieve well-defined positive changes in the behaviour patterns of the different sectors and spheres of life in society. It is one of the most widely used instruments of mass mobilization.

One of the motivating factors for public-service advertising is the need to remind and sensitise people to their rights and obligations as citizens. This essentially applies to the literate segments of the society. In a society characterized by mass illiteracy, however, the motivating factor for public-service advertising will be the need to educate the masses on matters such as health, family planning, road safety, education, civic responsibilities including prompt payment of taxes, voting during elections and so on.

There is no doubt that people's apathy and attitude of indifference to government may contribute to the necessity for public-service advertisements designed to correct identifiable negative attitudes. For instance, life in Nigeria today points to various negative attitudes which include nonchalant attitude to work, vandalization of public property, lack of patriotic spirit, bribery and corruption, embezzlement of public fund, electoral malpractices, and so on, which will have to be corrected in order for the nation to make progress in all spheres of life. This probably explains why there are so many public-service advertisements aimed at promoting the appropriate positive attitudes among the generality of Nigerians.

The need for government to popularize its public programmes and persuade the people to comply with the principles of the programmes may also be another motivating factor for widespread public-service advertising. Such public-service

advertisements are used as part of social engineering programme aimed at mass mobilization.

Since public-service advertisements are used by the government or other authorities to convey particular/specific messages designed to achieve well-defined positive changes in the behavioural patterns of the different sectors and spheres of life in the society, they essentially carry direct messages which are necessarily related to the linguistic content of the sentence used. This means that the messages are concerned with telling the hearers exactly what to do. Thus, the analysis of public-service advertisements is highly amenable to speech acts theory.

### Theoretical Orientation

The basic tenet of Speech Acts Theory is that we use language to do things or to perform acts, and there are so many functions of, or ways in which we use speech. For instance, we use speech to advise, order, promise, request, assert, warn, criticize, apologize, and so on. Speech Acts Theory is meant to give an account of acts of speech, of utterances, (i.e. individual tokens of sentences in context). It is part of a theory of communicative competence or performance. Speech Acts Theory provides insights into our use of language.

J.R. Searle's theory of speech acts as outlined in his book, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, is largely adopted in this work. Searle points out that the production or issuance of a sentence token under certain conditions is a speech act, and speech acts (...) are the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication" (Ibid: p. 16). The argument is that "a theory of language is part of a theory of action simply because speaking is a rule-governed form of behaviour" (Ibid: p. 17). Thus, speaking a language is performing speech acts such as making statements, giving commands, making promises, and so on, according to firmly established rules.

Like Austin, Searle distinguishes acts that are normally performed by someone who produces an utterance. He makes a distinction between an "illocutionary act" and a "perlocutionary act" such that an illocutionary act is the "complete" speech act whereas a perlocutionary act is the consequence or the actions, thoughts, beliefs, etc of the hearer(s). For example, "by arguing I may *persuade* or *convince* someone; by warning him I may *scare* or *alarm* him; by making a request I may *get him to do something*; by informing him I may *convince him* (*enlighten, edify, inspire him; get him to realize...*). (Ibid. p. 25). The expressions underlined above denote perlocutionary acts.

Searle points out that the appropriacy or felicity conditions together define and constitute the nature of each speech act. He classifies these felicity conditions into *propositional content conditions* which specify restrictions on the content of the utterance, *preparatory conditions* that deal with the real world prerequisites to each illocutionary act; *sincerity conditions* that specify the requisite beliefs, feelings and intentions of the speakers; and *essential conditions* that concern the particular purpose the speaker intends the utterance to count as. These felicity



conditions exactly specify the appropriate context for the performance of an illocutionary act on an occasion of utterance. In other words, they are specifications for appropriate usage. For instance, for the issuance of an order to count as an order, the *propositional content* of the order must refer to a future act by the hearer while the three attendant conditions are specified as follows:

The *preparatory* conditions include that the speaker should be in a position of authority over the hearer, the *sincerity* condition is that the speaker wants the ordered act done and the *essential* condition has to do with the fact that the speaker intends the utterance as an attempt to get the hearer to do the act (Ibid.: p. 64).

In this connection, consider the following public-service advertisement in our corpus:

**Text 1**

Be committed to your job.  
A full day's pay demands  
a full day's work.

The first speech act (i.e., "Be committed to your job.") count as ordering because its propositional content refers to a future act by the hearer, that is, becoming committed to his job, its preparatory condition includes that the speaker (i.e., government) is in an appropriate position of authority, its sincerity condition is that the speaker wants the hearer to, in his day to day approach to his job, provide evidence of a good measure of commitment to his job and its essential condition has to do with the fact that the speaker intends the utterance as an attempt to get the hearer to behave in ways that indicate commitment to his job. The above conditions together describe the situation that must obtain for language users to construe what is heard as an order. This is to say that the performance of illocutionary acts within any language is based on specific rules.

Moreover, consider assertions, for example. The appropriacy or felicity conditions that exactly specify the appropriate usage of assertions are such that the *propositional content condition* of the assertion must commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition while the three accompanying conditions are specified as follows:

The preparatory conditions include the fact that the hearer must have some basis for supposing the asserted proposition is true, the sincerity condition is that he must believe it to be true, and the essential condition has to do with the fact that the utterance is an attempt to inform the hearer and convince him of its truth (Ibid.: p. 64).



Thus, characteristically, each speech act has an underlying constitutive rule, which makes it count as that particular speech act.

### **Searle's Classification of Speech Acts:**

Searle's classification of speech acts presented in his article titled "A classification of Illocutionary Acts" is based essentially on three major criteria: "illocutionary point (or purpose)", "direction of fit between words and the world" and "expressed psychological state". The first essential criterion, "Illocutionary point", is concerned with the "purpose" of the speech act. For instance, a promise has the purpose of committing the speaker to do something, while the point of an order is to get the hearer to do something.

The second major criterion, "direction of fit between words and the world", deals with getting words to match the world or getting the world to match the words. For instance, assertions are instances in which we try to get our words to match the world (Ibid. 3). Consider in this connection, the first speech act in the same text 1 above, (i.e., "Be committed to your job."). This utterance is an order, and its direction of fit is world-to-word in the sense that the words express what the speaker expects the hearer to do and which when done would cause the world at least, to look more like what the speaker meant his words to achieve – in the case under consideration, a new Nigerian society where people are committed to their jobs. Searle represents the word-to-world direction of fit with a downward arrow (↓) and the world-to-word direction of fit with an upward arrow (↑). He points out that the direction of fit is always a consequence of illocutionary point. For instance, the illocutionary point of "Be committed to your job" is to get the hearers to become more responsible by putting their best into their jobs, as a result, its direction of fit aims at getting the world (i.e., the Nigerian society in this case) to achieve the illocutionary point or purpose.

The third essential criterion, "the expressed psychological state", deals with the sincerity conditions of the illocutionary act. Thus, a man who states, explains, asserts or claims that **p** expresses the belief that **p**; a man who promises, vows, threatens, or pledges to do **a** expresses an intention to do **a**; a man who orders, commands, requests **H** to do **A** expresses a desire (want, wish) that **H** do **A**; a man who apologizes for doing **A** expresses regret at having done **A**; etc (Ibid. p. 4). This is to say that "in the performance of any illocutionary act with a propositional content, the speaker expresses some attitude, state, etc to that propositional content" (Ibid. p. 4).

Searle classifies illocutionary acts into five categories: Representatives (which he later calls Assertives), Directives, Commissives, Expressives, and Declarations. Searle notes that the point or purpose of Assertives (Representatives) is "to commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to something's being the case, to the truth, of the expressed proposition" (Ibid.: 10). They can be assessed as either true or false. Their direction of fit is 'words to the world' and the psychological state expressed is 'Belief (that p.)'. Some verbs that denote assertives are boast, describe, conclude, predict, deduce, etc.

The second category of illocutionary acts is Directives. Its illocutionary point is “to get the hearer to do something” (Ibid. p. 11). The direction of fit is world-to-words; this is to say that the speaker tries to get reality to conform to his words. The expressed psychological state is want (or wish or desire). The propositional content is always that the Hearer (H) does some future action A (Ibid. p. 11). Example of verbs denoting members of this class are: ask, order, command, request, beg, pray, entreat, invite, advise, etc.

The third category of illocutionary acts is Commissives. Searle defines Commissives as “those illocutionary acts whose point is to commit the speaker, (again in varying degrees) to some future course of action” (Ibid. p. 11). Examples of verbs denoting members of this class include: promise, vow, and pledge. Like the Directives, the direction of fit for Commissives is world-to-words. However, the difference between Commissives and Directives has to do with where commitment lies, as between speaker and hearer. In the case of Commissives, commitment to some future action lies with the speaker while in the case of Directives, it is the hearer that is expected to do some future action. The propositional content of Commissives is always that the speaker S does some future action A. The sincerity condition is intention, that is, the speaker must intend to do the future action A.

The fourth category of speech acts is Expressives. Its illocutionary point is “to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content” (Ibid. p. 12). Verbs denoting Expressives include thank, congratulate, apologize, condole, deplore and welcome. There is no direction of fit in Expressives because the speaker is “neither trying to get the world to match the words nor the words to match the world, rather the truth of the expressed proposition is presupposed” (Ibid. p. 12). Thus, for example, when I apologize for having stepped on someone’s toe, my purpose is not to merely claim that a particular toe was stepped on, rather the fact that a given toe was stepped on is presupposed, and I regret stepping on the toe in question.

Searle’s fifth category of speech acts is Declarations. In this class “the state of affairs represented in the proposition expressed is realized or brought into existence by the illocutionary force-indicating device” (Ibid. p. 13). This is to say that “saying makes it so”, thus echoing Austin. Searle points out that the defining characteristic of Declarations is that the successful performance of one of its members brings about correspondence between the propositional content and reality, that is, successful performance guarantees that the propositional content corresponds to the world such that if I successfully perform the act of appointing you chairman, then you are chairman; if I successfully perform the act of declaring a state of war, then war is on; if I successfully perform the act of marrying you, then you are married to me (Ibid. p. 13). In order that the declaration be successfully performed, extra-linguistic institutions and a system of constitutive rules of language are involved. It is only when the declarations

concern language itself such as when one says; *I define, I call*, etc that extra-linguistic institutions are not required (Ibid. pp. 14-15).

### **Speech Acts in the Public – Service Advertisements: Sample Analysis**

#### *Text 2*

Do not sell your votes. They form  
part of your weapons to install a  
good government in the country.

The above advertisement is an example of political education advertisement. It contains two speech acts. The illocutionary point in the first speech act is general exhortation not to sell one's votes. Its propositional content is that a voter's card has to be seen as a prized possession of any responsible citizen desirous of seeing the installation of a responsive government. It must not be exchanged for anything. The relevance of this exhortation arises from the fact that past elections were known to have been characterized by large-scale electoral malpractices including cash inducements. The incidence of large-scale electoral malpractices forms part of the shared background knowledge of Nigerians. The direction of fit of the speech act is world-to-words, that is, the realities around us all should reflect changes in previous patterns of behaviour vis-à-vis elections and attitudes to the voter's card. The expressed psychological state of the speech act is desire for political consciousness. The relevant speech act, therefore, meets the conditions that identify directives.

The illocutionary point in the second speech act (i.e., "They form part of your weapons to install a good government in the country.") is to emphasize the importance of the vote as an instrument in the drive to install a caring, responsive government. Its direction of fit is words to the world: the citizenry determines the kind of government it gets by what it does vis-à-vis civic responsibilities such as voting. The voter's card is, therefore, part of the armoury in the 'battle' to secure a good government. The expressed psychological state is belief: the success of the political education programme hinges on recognition of a number of facts on the part of the citizenry. The speech act concerned, therefore, fulfills the conditions that identify assertives.

### **The Concept of Cohesion:**

Each of the public-service advertisements in our data is treated as a text because they each represent a unit of language in use. The public-service advertisements in our corpus were recorded from the radio. They are, therefore, spoken texts.

### **Text**

A text refers to any passage, spoken or written, that forms a unified whole. This is to say that a text is a unit of language in use. It is not a grammatical unit like a clause or a sentence; and it can be short or long, so it is not defined by size.

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In describing a text, Halliday and Hassan (1976:2) say:

A text is best regarded as a semantic unit: a unit not of form but of meaning. Thus it is related to a clause or sentence not by size but by REALIZATION, the coding of one symbolic system in another. A text does not consist of sentences; it is REALIZED BY, or encoded in sentences.

Thus, a text can be regarded as the basic unit of meaning in language. A distinguishing feature of a text is that it has texture.

### **Texture**

The concept of texture expresses the property of ‘being a text’. A passage perceived as a text contains certain linguistic features which can be identified as contributing to its total unity, thereby, giving it texture. In other words, texture deals with the total unity of a text; and it is provided by the cohesive relations that exist between the items within the text. Thus, there is evidence that there exists a semantic relation within a text that defines it as a text. This semantic relation rests on the concept of cohesion.

### **Cohesion**

Cohesion has to do with how the text is constructed ‘as a semantic edifice’, not what a text means. Halliday and Hassan (1976:4) point out that

Cohesion occurs where the INTERPRETATION of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one presupposes the other, in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded except by recourse to it. When this happens, a relation of cohesion is set up, and the two elements, the presupposing and the presupposed, are thereby at least potentially integrated into a text.

By integration into a text, we mean that the presupposing and the presupposed items combine to create a coherent whole. In essence, the concept of cohesion is a relational one. It is the relation between one item and another that is cohesive, not the presence of a particular class of items. Consider in this connection the following public-service advertisement:

#### *Text 3*

Hoarders of essential commodities are  
enemies of the society. Expose them.

The pronoun *them* in the second sentence refers back to (is *Anaphoric* to) *hoarders of essential commodities*, in the first sentence. In other words, the word *them* presupposes for its interpretation something other than itself. This presupposition is met by *hoarders of essential commodities* in the preceding

sentence. The presupposition and its resolution provide cohesion between the two sentences. It is in this sense that the anaphoric function of them ‘gives cohesion to the two sentences, so that we interpret them (i.e. the two sentences) as a whole; and together they constitute a text. The cohesion between the two sentences is, however, brought about not just by the presence of the referring item along but by the presence of both the referring item and the item that it refers to. It, therefore, does not suffice that there is a presupposition; the presupposition must also be resolved.

In the above public – service advertisement, the two items: *them* and *hoarders of essential commodities* are identical in reference, or COREFERENTIAL. Coreferentiality is the cohesive agent that provides texture in this instance.

In discussing the concept of cohesion, Halliday and Hassan (1976:27-28) conclude thus:

Cohesion, therefore, is part of the text-forming component in the linguistic system. It is the means whereby elements that are structurally unrelated to one another are linked together, through the dependence of one on the other for its interpretation. The resources that make up the cohesive potential are part of the total meaning potential of the language, having a kind of catalytic function in the sense that, without cohesion, the remainder of the semantic system cannot be effectively activated at all.

This is to say that cohesion is crucial to the formation of the coherent whole termed text.

It is to be noted that the question as to whether the presupposing and or the presupposed items fall within the same sentence or not is irrelevant to the nature of the cohesive relation because cohesion is a more general notion, which is above considerations of structure. Thus, cohesion occurs both within the same sentence and across sentence boundaries (i.e., between sentences) because it is a text-forming relation. However, the effect of cohesion across sentence boundaries is more striking and the meaning of such cohesion is more obvious because cohesive ties between sentences are the ONLY source of texture in such contexts, whereas, within the same sentence, there are also structural relations, which add to texture. Thus, in the description of a text, it is inter-sentence cohesion that is significant because it represents the variable aspects of cohesion, distinguishing one text from another.

### **Tie**

The term ‘tie’ refers to a single instance of cohesion: a term for one occurrence of a pair of cohesively related items: Halliday and Hassan (1976:4) points out that:

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The concept of a tie makes it possible to analyse a text in terms of its cohesive properties, and give a systematic account of its patterns of texture.

They identify five types of cohesive ties: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion (see Halliday and Hassan (1976) for details).

### **Cohesive Ties Evident in the Public-Service Advertisements**

The cohesive devices employed in the construction of the public-service advertisements in our data enhance the integration of the utterances into texts. Let us examine the following public-service advertisements to identify the semantic relations that exist within them.

#### *Text 4*

Don't merely preach what is  
good for the society.  
Show it by example.

The cohesive tie used in Text 4 is reference. The pronoun *it* in the second sentence is anaphoric to *what is good for the society* in the first sentence.

#### *Text 5*

The duty to make Nigeria great belongs to us all.  
Join the race to make Nigeria great.

Lexical cohesion is the cohesive tie that is in evidence in Text 5. It expresses itself in either the selection of the same lexical item twice, or featuring two different lexical items that are closely related semantically. Text 5 is characterised by a repetition of '*to make Nigeria great*' in the second sentence. Thus, the lexical items '*to make Nigeria great*' feature in both the first and the second sentence.

#### *Text 6*

Say no to bribery and corruption.  
Say no to drug abuse and trafficking.  
Say no to idleness. But, yes to uprightness.  
Yes to diligence. And, yes to nationalism and  
patriotism.

The cohesive tie evident in Text 6 is ellipsis. Here, we observe that *say* is left unexpressed in the last three sentences. However, although it is unexpressed, it is still understood. The structure of these sentences presupposes some preceding item and that is the key to what has been left unexpressed. The item *say* in the first three sentences serves as the source of the unexpressed *say*. The conjunction



*but* used to start the fourth sentence presupposes contrast between the propositions expressed by the first three sentences and that of sentences four, five and six. This conjunction mediates a relationship of cohesion between the first three sentences and the last three sentences.

There are also instances of lexical cohesion evident in the same Text 6. The text is characterised by a repetition of ‘Say no to’ repeated in the second and third sentences and a repetition of ‘yes to’ repeated in the fifth and sixth sentences. Thus, the lexical items ‘say no to’ occur in the first three sentences, while the lexical items ‘yes to’ occur in the last three sentences.

The preceding outline of the cohesive devices used in the public-service advertisements draws attention to the ways in which such devices enhance the integration of the sentences into texts.

### **Speech Acts in the Public-Service Advertisements & the Impact of Cohesion:**

The public-service advertisements in our corpus are made up of sequences of speech acts. These sequences themselves are integrated into texts that form coherent wholes such that the speech acts relate to one another, one way or the other. The texts, on their part, are made up of utterances. Utterances are sentences used in particular contexts; thus, they are contextualized. It is the utterances that express the speech acts and in most cases the speech acts are related to one another, one way or the other, although they tend to point to status differentials in the flow of the speaker’s action as will become clear in what follows. Consider, therefore, the following public-service advertisement:

#### *Text 7*

A good and responsible government  
does not come by chance.  
Vote sensibly to ensure this.

This public-service advertisement contains two speech acts corresponding to the two message units outlined above. The illocutionary point in the first speech act is to inform the people that a good and responsible government does not come by chance. They need to work at installing such government. Its direction of fit is words-to-world. The citizenry determines the kind of government it gets by how it responds to processes that bring about the government. The expressed psychological state is belief (that p): the speaker believes the expressed proposition and also wants the hearer to believe it too. The relevant speech act, therefore, fulfills the conditions that identify assertive. It is, thus, an assertive speech act.

The illocutionary point in the second speech act (i.e., “Vote sensibly to ensure this.”) is to exhort the people to vote wisely as a guarantee for securing a good government. The direction of fit of the speech act is world-to-words. That is, it is only through judicious voting that we can get a good and responsible

government. The expressed psychological state of the speech act is desire for prudent voting. In this regard, we are clearly faced with a directive speech act.

With the identification of the types of speech acts that characterize the public-service advertisement under consideration (Text 7), we can then discuss how the speech acts relate to one another. The assertive and directive speech acts evident in this public-service advertisement do not occur at the same level, rather they are ordered hierarchically, along a dominance – subordination line based on the intuitive notion of main point. The main goal of the public-service advertisement in question is to ensure that Nigerians vote for the right candidates while the sub goal is to provide good justification for the advice outlined in the advertisement – this is done via an expression indicating commitment ‘to something’s being the case’ (i.e., ‘A good and responsible government does not come by chance’). The claim that a good and responsible government does not come by chance is, therefore, the basis for the advice that follows. The main point of the sequence is contained in the directive such that the assertive is merely a supportive device providing motivation for the main act. As main act, the directive dominates the illocutionary goal. The assertive, though a subordinate act, contributes to the achievement of the main goal by providing a sufficiently compelling reason for, or one that is at least capable of inducing compliance with the directive. The realization of the main goal is, of course, the perlocutionary intention.

The relationship between the speech acts in Text 7 is one of justification. The desired effect of justification is that of providing the motivation/reason for giving the directive in order to enhance compliance. This is to say that the subordinate acts must be relevant to the main act and the reason provided must be plausible enough to achieve the designs of the main act.

Like the speech act sequences, the utterances within each text relate to one another to form a coherent whole. We have tried to show that the textual cohesion evident in the utterance of particular public-service advertisements is a direct result of the items that are cohesively related. The different instances of cohesion have been shown to be instances of cohesion across utterance boundaries in such a way that presupposed items and their presupposing counterparts occur in different utterances.

The analysis of the public-service advertisements with which this study is concerned within the framework provided by speech acts theory has also shown that each utterance (i.e. assuming if only for ease of exposition that sentence boundary = utterance boundary) expresses a speech act and the various speech acts contract relationships one with another within the text to achieve the desired perlocutionary intention. Thus, the concept of cohesion almost invariably, has some impact on the decoding of the speech acts in the public-service advertisements because the speech acts are not only in sequences, they are also related to one another.

The impact of the concept of cohesion on the decoding of the speech acts in the public-service advertisements are such that it is only if and when the

cohesively related items contained in the public-service advertisements are successfully interpreted that the appropriate speech acts can be properly understood. It is thus that successful interpretation of the directive speech act in Text 3, for instance,

*Text 8*

Hoarders of essential commodities  
are enemies of the society.  
Expose them.

requires a prior identification of the referent of the *them* that features in the text. It is in this sense that the concept of cohesion outlined in the preceding sections is central to not only a proper understanding and interpretation of the speech acts in the public-service advertisements concerned, but also to the success of the perlocutionary intention associated with them, that is, getting everyone to actually conform with the appropriate exhortations.

Moreover, the presence of cohesion - engendering items in the public-service advertisements underscore the structural links between segments of particular texts and thus, play some role in highlighting and/or confirming the fact that speech acts within a discourse contract particular kinds of relations with one another. In this connection, with reference to Text 3 above, the presence of the presupposing item *them* in the directive and the presence of the presupposed item *hoarders of essential commodities* in the assertive together suggest that the directive is structurally linked to the assertive in terms that engender a relationship between them.

### **Conclusion**

This work, therefore, shows that cohesive elements play some role in bringing out the fact that speech acts within discourse do relate with one another. Moreover, this work points out that the successful interpretation of the cohesively related items contained in a text enhances the understanding of the appropriate speech acts.

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## 25. On the Tripartite Structure of Hausa Informal Conversation

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This paper attempts to identify and characterize the prototypical tripartite structure (i.e. initiation, sustenance and termination) of informal conversation among Hausa speakers based on spontaneous, naturally occurring tape-recorded data coupled with close observational strategy typical of ethnomethodological research orientation. Studies on informal conversation among speech communities appeared to be accorded little attention compared to its formal counterpart; hence, the motivation for the present endeavour. In the light of the data collected and analyzed within the general framework of conversational analysis, (CA) this important phenomenon is evidently characterized by the so-called conversational trichotomy. Although the conversational mechanism is highly dichotomously structured, yet there appears to be some overlapping across the three tiers.

### 1. Introduction: Some Preliminary Remarks

It has been reported in the literature (Abdul 2002) based on prima facie evidence that Hausa speakers like other speech communities “orient themselves towards the observance of the three tier system in the conduct of their conversation”. There is, however, the need to conduct further studies to determine whether or not such claims (even though data-driven and profound) are well established and entrenched in the conversational structure and cultural milieu of Hausa people. Since the validity or otherwise of any study is tied largely to how much of it can be replicated in subsequent research efforts. This paper is an attempt in that direction. And invariably, its focus of enquiry is essentially to further identify and establish the so called proposed conversational trichotomy said to characterize the conversational mechanism of Hausa speakers based on a spontaneous, naturally occurring tape-recorded data coupled with close observational strategy typical of ethnomethodological research orientation.

The motivation for the present effort owes to the concern expressed in Abdul’s (2003) monumental work, for the urgent need to embark on systematic research in conventional Analysis (CA) in Nigeria. Since as he strongly and convincingly argued following Gumperz and Hymes (1972), that despite the fact that a lot has been researched and written on the rules of speaking in a wide varieties of societies no one is yet in a position to describe the rules of even one speech community”. It is on this note that Abdul (2003) makes specific call for more attention to be accorded to the description of how speakers of a particular language group actually use that language in mundane daily informal situations. It is imperative, therefore, to search and bring to the limelight the proto-typical characteristic patterns evident in the process and procedure of people’s everybody interactions; how people naturally engage in speech activities based



on painstaking evidences and not mere speculations. Hence, again, the *raison detre* for this study.

Generally, speech communities belonging to different linguistic groups are said to engage in myriad of social encounters (for details see Gumperz and Hymes 1972. Levinson 1983, Schiffrin 1988 and more recently Abdul Ibid). Such verbal encounters include, among others, quarrels, jokes, committee meetings, interviews, lectures, teasing, Chit-chat, banter and indeed conversation. Hausa speakers are no exception to this. However, there are cross-cultural and-linguistic conversation normative differences, globally, with regards to the realization of this very important phenomenon.

For the purpose of analysis and ease of lucid exposition of the various dimensions of the discussion and to put our discussion in clear and precise perspectives, the rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 deals with the explication of basic fundamental concepts central and relevant to the discussion. Also presented, here is the nature and composition of the data on which the discussion hinges. The methodological and analysis framework constitute section 3. The analytical and general discussion form the subject matter of section 4. Section 5 concludes our discussion.

## **2. Initiation, Sustenance and termination in Conversation: An expose.**

Since this paper is basically interested in identifying, characterizing and establishing the three major constituents of conversation viz.: initiation, sustenance and termination, it is crucial to first and foremost begin by explicitly and precisely defining the trio within the general realm of conversational structure. Equally essential, perhaps, is the need to provide some general and specific delineation of the term “conversation” itself and other related phenomena.

We may begin by first considering what constitutes conversation since this is the domain of operation where the three components parts (i.e. initiation, sustenance, and termination) of a typical ordinary conversation are located.

Of the many types of communicative act, most studies have been devoted to conversation, seen as the most fundamental and pervasive means of conducting human affairs (Crystal 1997). Ordinary casual conversation is possibly the most common of all language activities. We are constantly talking to one another about one thing or another. Sometimes the person addressed is an intimate friend, at other times a more casual acquaintance, and at still other times a complete stranger. But we still manage conversation because conversation is such a commonplace activity; we tend not to think about it from the point of view of how it is organized. Conversation, is thus an everyday phenomenon (Abdul 1997). It takes place in our homes, in the schools, on the streets, in the markets and several other places. Conversation is distinguished from a chat in a variety of ways. In drawing a distinction between the two, Cheepen and Moneghan (1990) have argued that “Conversations are not realized simply by mere production of utterances or speech by interlocutors. The speech encounters whose goals are primarily internal, and not seen to make reference to anything in particular are referred to as chats. But where the focus of attention is directed inwards, towards the participants and the creation of the shared world which that piece of discourse creates and promotes then conversation is said to have ensued.

Abdul (Ibid) further defines conversation as a speech encounter characterized by a number of features such as overall interactional goal, topic shift without the contexts of a predetermined topic schedule and equality of participant status. Conversation turns out, upon analysis, to be a highly structured activity, in which people tacitly operate with a set of basic conventions.

More formally and explicitly, conversation (Levinson 1983:284) may be considered to mean that familiar predominant kind of talk in which two or more participants freely alternate in speaking and which generally occurs outside specific institutional settings like religious services, law courts, classrooms and the like. Above all, conversation is a cooperative activity in two senses: in the Gricean sense, it depends on speakers and listeners sharing a set of assumptions about what is happening; and also for the fact that, it involves two or more parties, each of whom must be allowed the opportunity to participate. Consequently, there must be some principles which govern who gets to speak, i.e. principles of turn-taking. Turn taking in conversation is much more complex than it appears because we engage in it so easily and skillfully. Utterances usually do not overlap other utterances, and the gaps between utterances are said to be sometimes measurable in microseconds and on average are only a few tenths of a second, (Wardhaugh 1992). Turn-taking also applies in a variety of circumstances: between as few as two participants and upward of a score; on the telephone as well as in face-to-face interaction; and regardless of the length of particular utterances or how many people want to take a turn. Wardhaugh (Ibid) suggests that it appears that there must be some system of “traffic rules” which we are aware of since we manage the taking of turn effectively.

Pairing and turn taking are integral parts of all conversations, they are so by virtue of the fact that, as Wardhaugh (Ibid) rightly observed, we can identify a certain kind of language activities as conversation and particular instances as specific conversations. It is also generally established (Wardhaugh, 1992, Abdul 2003) that conversation has ways of getting started; has some recognizable core or substance, i.e., topic or topics, and is concludable. This paper is a further attempt to determine core characteristics of conversation, using actual data.

Initiation of a conversation has to do, especially with how participants begin to “lock” themselves in the conversation. The concept of “initiation” has been variously referred to as “opening”, “beginning”, “starting” and “introduction” (see Levinson 1983, Schegloff 1986, Wardhaugh 1992 and Abdul 1997, 2003) conversations have recognisable opening in both elaborate and less elaborate structures.

The beginning of a conversation will generally involve an exchange of greetings. (Schegloff Ibid). A telephone conversation may involve an exchange of Hello's: a meeting between strangers might require an exchange of “how do you do's followed by some kind of self-identification; a meeting between very intimate acquaintances who spend much time together may have its own special characteristic ritualistic beginning. However, as pointed by Wardhaugh (Ibid) much of this preliminary part of a conversation is highly prescribed by cultural setting: how you answer the telephone varies from group to group: greetings exchanges involving the used of names and address terms vary enormously; who speak first, what a suitable reply is, and even what variety of language is

employed may also be tightly constrained by circumstances, the nature of the conversation and the social identities of the participants in the social intercourse.

However, once a conversation has been initiated and the opening forms have been exchanged, it will be necessary to establish a topic or topics on which to talk. Perhaps among the three-tiers of conversation, how to sustain a conversation appears to be more difficult and complex to identify and adequately characterized. This is so, because most of those working within the circles of either conversation analysis or discourse analysis do not give it the requisite place of pride it deserves in the schemes of things. Abdul's (2002) first attempt to identify sustenance as a distinct entity in conversation is worthy of note. However, we are not unaware of the subtle references made to it in the course of a typical general discussion of themes and sub-themes of conversational pattern. In fact, this issue is more intricate in the face of the heated controversy surrounding identifiable definable basic parts of an exchange structure.

Much as it has proved possible to plot the structure of many conversation using ideas of classical pairing and chaining in order to show how dependent we are on them, yet there is actually some disagreements over whether there is such a basic two-part exchange (i.e. question-answer; greeting-greeting; request/offer-acceptance/refusal; farewell-farewell, etc). Another view holds that a basic "exchange" has three parts: "initiation"; "response"; and "feedback". In this view, unless some form of feedback occurs, the total exchange is incomplete (see Stubbs, 1983). Tsui (1989) also argued for such a three-part exchange in which a following move of some kind closes out the sequence: "a potentially three-part exchange, which may contain non-verbal component parts, is more adequate than an adjacency pair as a basic unit of conversational organization". Note that in both proposals "sustenance" as an entity is apparently absent. This then brings us to the following pertinent questions that are central to any characterization of sustenance:

- (i) how does talk proceed in turns?
- (ii) how is one utterance related to another?
- (iii) how topics are introduced developed and changed?

By the time these questions are addressed below the characteristics features of sustenance will be made bare. Conversations could be sustained through the observation of an important principle such as "adjacency pair". The basic pairing relationship provides the possibilities of both continuity and exchange in that it enables both to say something and for these some of the things to be related. It allows for options in the second member of each pair and for a kind of chaining effect. A question, for instance, can lead to an answer which can lead to a comment which can lead to an acknowledgement and so on. These, according to Wardhaugh (1992), are purely linear chains. But there can be other types of chain, as when a question-answer, or topic-comment routine is included as a sub-routine into some other pair.

Furthermore, it is a feature of a lot of conversations that "topics" are not fixed before-hand, but are negotiated in the process of conversing. Throughout a conversation, the next 'topic' of conversation is developing. Each speaker contributes to the conversation in terms of both the existing topic framework and

his or her personal topic (Brown & Yule 1983pp89-90). These are invariably, part of the major aspects of sustainability in conversation.

Generally, interest in a topic and its sustainability coupled with the topic development are the most salient features of how conversations are sustained. Once a topic is established, speakers can keep it going by employing many of the same devices they use as individuals to keep their turns going. They can link utterances together thematically, syntactically or logically. A wide variety of devices is available to achieve such continuity. In the case of individual turn these devices can prevent interruption in that they can be used to show that the speaker is not finished and that the turn will not be completed until it is properly marked as completed. So far as continuing a topic is concerned, the same type of device serves to link utterance to utterance. One speaker can link remarks to another speaker's remarks, overlaps another's remarks, or even deliberately adopt or adapt the devices the other is employing. Feedback, an important element in warranting the continuation of a turn, can also lend approval to the continuation of a topic and thus the conversation.

The third and the last but not the least of the three constituents is termination. Conversations have recognisable termination. Termination is sometimes referred to as "closing" "ending" and "exit" (see Levinson 1983, Wardhaugh 1992, Abdul 2002). Conversations must also be brought to close (Aston 1995). Quite often the close itself it's ritualistic typical features includes an arrangement for next meeting, a sequence of Okays, and an exchange of goodbye's. But such rituals do not come unannounced; they are often preceded by clear indication that closings are about to occur. All topics have been exhausted and nothing more remains to be said, but it is not quite the time to exchange farewells. There are the points to fit "pre-closing signal", which serve to negotiate actual closing. Such signals can involve an expression like well, I think that's all", or a brief deliberate summary of some earlier agreement or a personal exchange like "give my regards to your wife", or they may take the form of a gesture or physical movement such as rising from a chair or adjusting your posture in some way. Such signals indicate that the conversation is being closed with final closure waiting only for a ritual exchange. An actual closing may involve several steps: The closing down of a topic, e.g., "so that's agreed" or "one o'clock then" repeated by the other party or acknowledged in some form; then possibly some kind of pre-closing exchange and finally an exchange of farewell. It is noteworthy that virtually all the three tiers of conversation have to be negotiated.

### **2.1 On the Nature and Composition of the Data**

A corpus of data has been collected in three different sessions (in quest of possible symmetries and/or asymmetries for the realization of the objectives of this study. This does not however, mean that one has lost sight of the fact stressed by Dicks (1974) and highlighted in Abdul (2002) that several of daily conversations cannot be ethically taped. The data here under systematic scrutiny comprises recordings and transcripts of naturally occurring conversations which conforms to the standard requisite data quality as identified in Levinson (1983). The data has also been collected, prototypically in almost identical speech events

and situations in line with the Zwirner's (1983) requirement; in conversation-friendly free settings typical of recreational meeting centres.

According to Abdul (2002) following Schiffrein (1988), McCarthy (1991) and Levinson (1983) "conversation-friendly setting, particularly homes and recreational centers are places where interactants engage in free, unregulated and uncensored interactions". The data presented and analyzed in this paper are gathered in this typical social setting via the use of tape recorder. Initially, recordings were covertly done, without the participant's knowledge. However, when they were subsequently informed of the reason behind such recordings they did not express any objections.

### **3. Methodological Consideration and Analytical Framework**

The methodological orientation of this study and the analytical tools exploited are typically those of conversational Analysis (CA). Conversational analysis as proposed and practiced by Sack's Schegloff and Jefferson (see Sacks et al. 1974) is a rigorously empirical approach, which avoids premature theory constructions. The methods of analysis are purely inductive as search is made for reoccurring pattern across many records of naturally occurring conversations. And this is the central tenet on which the present study rests.

Within the parlance of CA, the analyst appeals less to intuitive judgments, which though may guide research, are not regarded as explanation to what the interlocutor does. (Levinson, 1983).

Thus, recordings of naturally occurring conversations (Abdul 2003) are analyzed in order to discover how participants understand and respond to one another in their turn at talk and how, therefore, sequences of activities are generated.

The main objective of CA, it should be noted, is to uncover the sociolinguistic competence which underlies the production and interpretation of talk in social interaction. The principal focus of CA is ordinary conversation, its perspectives and methods and the most obvious aspect of the cooperative nature of conversation notes Mcshane (1980:57) is its organization by turns where one party speaks at a time and there are periodic exchanges of roles between, the speakers and the listeners. The data under investigation here are recordings of naturally occurring conversations. These are analyzed in order to discover how sequences of activities and exchanges such as initiation mechanism for the sustenance of conversation and how conversations are terminated by participants, within the general set up of turn-taking that characterized conversation.

#### **3.1 Data Presentation and Analysis**

In this section we present the data and analyzed it according to the tripartite nature of conversation (i.e. initiation, sustenance and termination). Our data comprises five different sessions of conversation. One part of the data entails conversation between two neighbours at a casual meeting centre. The other portion comprises one-to-many verbal encounter. An analysis of these is presented, respectively below: A representative sample of the data is provided in the appendix.



### 3.2 The Recreational (Meeting Centre) Setting.

The data represent conversation between interactants in a free and freely, relaxed circumstance that usually characterized Hausa recreational meeting centre, popularly known as *daba*, where conversationalists engage in verbal exchange called *Hira* (a free for all verbal encounter).

Conversation in this setting; particularly how they are started, sustained and closed, have its unique characteristic patterns. In this setting, participant's entry in and exit from the pool of conversation is difficult to predict. Each of the potential participants decides how best to make himself part and parcel of the group, as he requires no special offer.

### 3.3 Initiation

Conversational initiation in recreational settings are generally characterized by greeting exchanges (where possible), regulation of potential interlocutors' conversational behaviour, expression of happiness, sorrow or surprise, permission seeking, recall of previous encounters, enquiries and so on. Other activities include expression of group solidarity and exchange of bantering remarks. Consider the extract of conversation between two neighbours below:

(1)

A: Mallam Shehu, have you gone?  
That matter, you said?

B: Indeed I checked, yes I went

A: Did you hear what happened?

B: Yes, I found out that I got about ten  
thousand Naira and.....

A: mállám Shéhù ká tàfi ábin  
nán dín nán kó kà cé?

B: lálle ná dúbá é, ná tàfi.

A: ká jí abín dà yà fárú kó?

B: é ní ná gá ná sàmú wàjén  
dùbú tàrà dà

A closer look at the above data reveals that the initiation of the conversation is via question and answer regarding a known topic of interest to the both speaker and listener (or addresser and addressee).

An examination of conversation between more than two interactants in the same setting are characteristically different. Consider the following extracts:

(2)

A: It appears, Mallam Usman that there  
are new buildings in your residential areas  
beyond your domiciles or residential area.

C. Indeed, it is so

B. In fact we now... (Interrupted)

A. You are right in the centre of  
the township.

C. Exactly so! Exactly! But again  
Surprisingly even there I have been...  
ah! ah!!!... ah!!! (expressing great  
surprise).

B. Yes, those senseless people are  
beginning to realize this reality.

A: mállám úsmán dúk án  
wùcé kú dà gíní kó?

C. àná kó bàtú?

B. ái má yánzú... (interrupted)

A. kún kómó tsàkiyár gàrì.

C. qwàrái ko! qwàrái! ámmá  
kùmá àbín māmákí ná gà wái  
hár càn ámmà ... á! á! á!.

B. áw, wàxàndà ámmáhaukàtá  
sún fàrá hánkàlì.

Much as the above opening, typical of one to many interactants conversation, in a normal recreational set up could equally begin with "question-answer sequence



that characterized the first case we've seen earlier, yet there are several discernable points of contrast. For instance, the question employed in this case is clearly an indirect one in fact put in a suggestive and polite manner (e.g. "would you say" sort of a thing). Again, it is evident from the data, that instead of ordinarily a single participant turn-taking mechanism observed by just two interactants that begins a conversation; in one-to-many conversation, there are multiple contributions (turn takings) and various entry points that sets the machine of initial aspect of the conversation in motion. Thus, we've seen indirect question followed by an indirect answer, then followed by establishment of facts or fact-finding and then finally agreements reached. But then how are conversations in these two different speech events sustained? This we consider next.

### 3.4 Sustaining a Conversation

In this section, we consider, from the evidences available in the data under investigation, how is the exchange machinery sustained. However, it may not be out of place, if we first identify the general definable characteristic features of sustainability and perhaps its dynamics in the scheme of conversation.

Sustaining conversations in recreational settings, such as the one under study here, is characterized by a system of well-coordinated giving and taking the right turn at talk or how individuals alternate turns at talk. Another mechanism for sustaining a conversation has to do with the fact that typically "topics" are not predetermined in a lot of conversation, but normally negotiated in the process of conversation. Usually, throughout a conversation, successively, the next topic of conversation is developing. And as each topic unfolds and develops the engine of sustainability is lubricated and set in motion. Conversation gets generated, the rate and tempo of sustainability gets heightened, as interlocutors get more and more linguistically engaged with one another. Each of the speakers contribute to the conversation in terms of both the existing topic framework and his or her personal topic. These are the chief catalysts that keep the machinery of sustainable conversation in high gear. In a nutshell, generally, interest of a topic, its suitability coupled with the topic development are the dynamics and some of the most salient features of how conversations are sustained. Feedback and empathetic signalings constitute other devices for ensuring continuity of conversation. However, let us examine our data and contextually see how conversations are sustained. We begin by considering the following extracts.

(3)

- A. What is it exactly? That adjustment, has it been done?  
Is it going to be enjoyed by everyone?  
B. No, only those whom the university is owing some money, are entitled to it.  
A. Everyone whom is owed some payment.  
B. Those who suffered some deductions in the past.  
A. I don't understand the nature of the reimbursement you're talking about.

- A. mé yé wái? ái wánnán  
gyáráń, án yí? Kówà àkà yì mà shì?  
B. à' à dúk wándà àddà báshì  
shí nà dà shì  
A. dúk wándà àddà báshì  
B. wándà àkà cìré má sánnán bá.  
B. ní bán gànè kùxín dà àkà  
nǔfǐ bá fǎ ...

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>B. For example, it affects those who have either collected computer loan or some other things...</p> <p>A. Yes</p> <p>B. Those who have finished repaying the loan during strike, but when deductions continue even when the strike was called off.</p> <p>A. Is it then only for those who suffered Continued deduction</p> <p>B. Yes</p> <p>A. Alright, then I'm not one of those, that's the problem.</p> <p>A. Because, I shall be finishing this month... I didn't collect... it is the first one that I received. Not the computer loan, but the seventy thousand naira.</p> <p>B. Yes, I understand, I understand.</p> <p>A. Did you remember them?</p> <p>B. But then aren't you repaying the loan, even before the strike?</p> <p>A. Yes, there were deductions.</p> <p>B. Therefore, you should check and find out</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Checking</p> <p>A. Okay</p> | <p>B. kàmár wándà computer kà ámsá kó wàni àbù ká ámsá ...</p> <p>A. é</p> <p>B. wándà àkà cìré má kággámá àná yáyín aíkí a ánká dāwó àkà ci gābā dà cìré má.</p> <p>A. sái wándà àkà ci gābā dà cìré má kó?</p> <p>B. é'</p> <p>A. yāwwá, aí ní bán cíkìn hàkànan shí ám mātšàlà.</p> <p>A. dón wānnán wātán né zán qáré. ní bán ámsá... ná fārkón nán né ná ámsá. wándà bá ná computer bá, òbù sàbáín.</p> <p>B. í, ná gáné, ná gáné.</p> <p>A. ká tūná sù kó?</p> <p>B. tó, aí ámmá zùwà à yí yáyín aíkí áná cìré má kó?</p> <p>A. í, àná cìréwá.</p> <p>B. sàbódá hàká ká dái yí ká gāní.</p> <p>A. tó.</p> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

One can clearly see from the foregoing verbal interaction between two colleagues that several factors accounts for the sustenance of the conversation. First, the topic of the conversation (i.e. the reimbursement of extra deductions) is of keen interest to the both parties. Second, the strict observation of adjacency pair that throughout characterized the turn-talking makes it possible for each one of them to gainfully and equally partake in the discourse. And this in turn encouraged the continuity of the lively conversation. Third, the most prominent aspect of the conversation that keeps it enlivened is information-seeking or inquiries and fact-findings via questions-answers sequences counterbalanced and further facilitated by clearing disagreement(s) and/or doubt(s) and consequent consensus-building mechanism in terms of resolutions and agreements reached, in the final analysis. We've seen, also, sometimes memory-searching and recalls techniques are invoked to establish the facts of the issue at stake. However, curiously enough, the possibility of the addresser (or speaker) enjoying reimbursement, more than anything else makes him to perpetually engage the addressee (or listener) and keeps him verbally entangled, and hostage in the conversation.

On the contrary, the one-to-many participants' conversation depicts a different scenario. Here, as we shall presently see the sustenance of the conversation is fuelled and propelled by different set of communicative events and circumstances. First and foremost, the topic (i.e. new building conversation in hitherto remote residential area inhabited by the addressee) is both a personal and general one. The first participant is appreciative of the fact that the

residential area is becoming increasingly peopled by new residents. This invariably and suddenly generate the interest of the addressee and other co-conversationalists. Information-sharing, discrediting and disproving the cynics, expression of dissatisfaction, sympathy, empathy and solidarity extended to the addressee by way of raising questions and dismay against lack of adequate provision of social amenities, such as roads, in the residential area occupy centre stage in sustaining and maintaining the smooth flow of the conversation. These are instantiated and substantiated in the data cited in 3.2 above and the one that follows:

(4)

- |                                                                                                               |                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. But now, wouldn't they construct a road that leads directly there?                                         | A. ámmá hár yánzú bà à mùkù hányá hár wùrín?                                                  |
| B. There are roads although they are local ones. even the one leading to Rima radio is dilapidated by people. | B. á...àkwáí hányóyí sáí dái local hányà né. wánnán má gá tà nán tá Rima Radio sún lálácé tá. |
| D. They are not maintaining them. To say the truth. The governor has not done                                 | D. bá à wàní gyáráwá. gwámmá gáskiyà báí yì màná kómí bá                                      |
| .... anything for us... (interrupted)                                                                         |                                                                                               |
| B. Perhaps, in my opinion, they have not complained to him.                                                   | B. á... tó... bá à kái máí Complain bá níká gání.                                             |
| D. Every road that lead to Rima radio, is not good enough.                                                    | D. dúk hányár dà táyyí Rima Radio bà tà qwàráí tá bá.                                         |
| B. Yes, but you need to take some political                                                                   | B. áw, ámmà yá kàmàtá kù action xáu kù action.                                                |
| E. Including that one.....along Dallatu's house.                                                              | E. hár dà wáccán tà gídán dállátú                                                             |
| E. Indeed, the one along Dallatu's house.                                                                     | E. tà gídán dállátú wállá hí.                                                                 |

### 3.5 Termination

The closing segment of a conversation is a delicate matter both technically, in the sense that they must be so placed that no party is forced to exit while still having compelling things to say and socially, in the sense that over-hasty and over-slow terminations can carry unwelcome inferences about the social relationships between the interlocutors. However, the typical features of this tier in this conversational setting are the arrangements for a next meeting, a sequence of okays closing down the arrangements (or other topics). Other activities include agreements, for forgiveness seeking, apologies for leave-taking, exchange of well-wishes and good wills, adjournment of deliberation until further inquiries and clearances are made. It is also characterized by expression of conversation and acceptance of a viewpoint, reiteration and recapitulation of the key-points raised in the conversation, as well as suggestions, recommendations and pledges in respect of certain matters. Some of these characteristic features are identifiable in the extracts cited below.

(5)

- |                                                                      |                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| B. Really, it is exactly so in respect of any body owing some money. | B. tó kówa wándà áddà báshì hàkà tàkè. |
| A. In that case, I shall check.                                      | A. tó zán jé ín dú bà                  |
| B. Indeed, it is in this way you can understand                      | B. tó sáí, ín bá hàkà káyyí bá         |

- |                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. With whom does one check?                                                                                                   | bá kà íyà gánéwá.                                                                                 |
| B. Presently, arrangements have been Completed. The payment will be made on Monday. In fact, there is going to be cash payment | A. wàjén wá àkà dúbàwá?<br>B. yànzù má án kámmálá àbín Monday zá à biyá, cash payment mà zà à yí. |
| A. Alright, with whom can one find out?                                                                                        | A. ú-n. tó wàjén wá zá à sàní?                                                                    |
| B. That one too, is with Dan Manto.                                                                                            | B. shí má dái shíná wàjén xan mántó.                                                              |
| A. Okay, till Monday, then.                                                                                                    | A. tó yáwwà sái Monday ké nán.                                                                    |

Contrast the above data with the one in one-to-many participants' conversation below, where the conversation ended by making suggestions, proposals concurrence and expression of resignation to fate as a result of frustration.

- |                                                                                                                       |                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| B. There is the need for you to make complaints to the Government. Again, governor the once paid a visit to the area. | B. yá kàmatá kám kù yí kùma yá tàvā kái tà wátá zìyártá |
| E. Exactly so.                                                                                                        | E. qwàrái kó.                                           |
| F. He once visited you.                                                                                               | F. yá tàvā kái mùkú zìyártá.                            |
| B. Talking about repairing the Rima radio, we are certainly nowhere close to getting the necessary attention          | B. gídán Radio dái mú kám gà wá mùké.                   |

#### 4. General Discussion

From the foregoing analysis of the three constituents of conversation certain interesting discernable facts and features are evident. On a general note, the central characteristic feature of all the three tiers is negotiation. Usually initiation, sustenance and termination are negotiated through sequential coordination also sometimes, there appears to be overlapping across the three tiers of conversation.

Some pieces of evidences available from our data concur with the observation made by Loveday (1982) that conversation openings are not meaningless mechanism, but generally bear significant influence on the rest of the exchanges. This is because it is with their use that the relationship between the participants is set. In fact as Abdul (2003:537) notes, it is during the opening sequence that the partners evaluate each other and judge whether and in what ways further interaction can be developed. Thus, if care is not taken entering wrongly into a conversation will be "open to severe misinterpretation...which may eventually lead to shock, disappointment and even grievous insult" (See Wolfson 1983:62 for similar remarks) particularly, if interactants fail to take cognizance of the type of relationship between them. These markedly characterize conversational opening and these are evidently clear from what we've seen in our present study.

More specifically, it is worth mentioning that conversational openings are points where greetings are exchanged and those serve as tickets for further verbal exchanges. Greetings between familiar or even unfamiliar interactants are means of ensuring and reassuring conversationalists that relationships are still cordial in spite of what might have previously transpired between them (see Goffman 1955 for a similar observation). On the other hand, if greeting passes are declined,

those declinations represent uncooperative nature of the decliners to partake in the social interaction. Note we've earlier remarked in (Section 1) that successful conversation is essentially a cooperative enterprise. Greetings also signal other things between unfamiliar participants, greetings indicate not only an intention to be friendly, but as Firth (1972) remarks, an expression of emotion, an announcement of presence as well as statement of pleasure at someone's arrival or sight. Successful completion of a greeting exchange notes Schegloff (1999) may involve claims of recognition by participants that they have recognized each other or that they are pleased to have met or become acquaintances. Moreover, as Abdul (2002: 143) argues acquaintanship is a major basis for the operation of fruitful interaction.

Furthermore, familiarity between interactants are established or displayed within the terrain of openings. This is confirmed by Schegloff's (1979: 26) remark that "the vast majority of conversational exchanges occur between recurrent parties". Such familiarity can be expressed by identifying an interactant by name, referring to the past talks that took place between them as well as cracking jokes. In the absence of familiarity, accreditation is crucial before conversation ensues. Accreditation is construed (Abdul 2002 p. 143) to be "a conversational situation in which an interactant is oriented towards the necessary requirement for getting involved in a talk in which he is not formally ratified". Thus in the event, a would-be interlocutor behaves contrary to the established practice, "he is regulated and shown how to behave". On the other hand, if however, his identity and intentions for participating are suspicious, he faces a probe and other participants may refuse to give him a conversational ticket (for a detailed account of this, see Abdul 2001). Another activity closely related to the issue of familiarity is tackling any social misconduct committed by an intending interlocutor. This is usually carried out by the expression of apologies. Sometimes jokes appear to be prominent activity in conversational openings.

Generally conversation are sustained by participant engaging in business tier of the conversation. However, more specifically, sustainability of conversation is engineered, facilitated and engendered by successive conversational control exercised by participants with relevant overtures extended to one another, cooperative role sharing with relatively fewer interruptions among interlocutors and successful topic shifts from the old to new ones.

Also, participants' free alternation in speech generates and maintain conversation. This is further enhanced by effective, efficient and evenly distributive turn-taking.

Sustenance of conversation is equally engineered by periodic exchanges of roles between the speakers and the listeners.

Virtually all of the above factors that characterize sustainability of conversation are evident in our data. By land large conversational harmony is the hallmark of effective sustainability of verbal exchange machinery.

Every conversation started and managed must in one way or the other not merely end but brought to a close (Sacks 1974). Such closings notes Abdul (2003) following Traugott and Pratt (1980) are not as simple as they seem: they are socially problematic. Closings are generally difficult for many people. Many people find it difficult to get out of a conversation. Closings are supposed to be properly done via appropriate signals otherwise they may lead to embarrassment.



Wrong use of signals for termination are regarded as repressive, inhibitive and intolerant (Klapp 1978).

Once conversationalists arrive at the pre-closing stage, specific acknowledgement of that fact must be made if somehow the conversation does not actually proceed to close: “oh, by the way”, I’ve just remembered’ or “something else has just occurred to me”. An actual closing may involve several steps: the closing down of a topic, e.g., “so that’s agreed” or “one o’clock then” repeated by the other party or acknowledged in some form; then possibly some kind of pre-closing exchange, for instance “okay-okay”; a possible further acknowledgement of the nature of the exchange, for example could be “Good to see you”, thank again”, or “see you soon”; and finally an exchange of farewells characterized typically by “bye-bye”.

Specifically, from the evidences available in our data at the closing tier, participants are noted to primarily engage in the following activities. Interactants terminates their conversations by means of expression of consensus. Also such conversational endings are characterized by teasing, exchange of jokes as well as farewells. Another feature that appears prominently in the closing segment of conversation are rhetorical questions.

## **5. Concluding Remarks**

In retrospect the characteristics we’ve just discussed are some of the more interesting ones that have been observed in everyday conversation. And in view of the data presented, and analyzed in the preceding sections, we would like to make the following observations. First conversational openings are places where interlocutors generate topics for conversation and provide enabling conditions and speech events that facilitate more and more talks. Second, sustaining a conversation is characterized by observation of progressive turn-taking, topic shifts and other devices that cultivate and ensure the interests of the interactants, which makes the overall, exercise a rewarding one. Third, conversation gets terminated when either topics are largely exhausted as postponed until future encounters. This could be done by means of mutually accepting closing bids, and failure to introduce more topics. Our findings also appear to concur, to a large extent, with Abdul’s (2002) submission that generally closings seem to be shorter and less engaging than openings where more conversational rituals are conducted. Also sustaining a conversation, which is parallel to Abdul’s (Ibid) business tier, is longer than both the openings and closings because this is the point where the business of conversation is negotiated through different kinds of verbal exchanges.

Finally, all the three aspects of conversation identified and analyzed in the foregoing discussion are characterized by the remarks made by Wardhaugh (1992) that in the course of conversation “we observe the decencies of linguistic behaviour, choosing our words to match the circumstances. Those circumstances tell us that a particular conversation is but one in a long stream of conversations that will fill our lives. If we want to keep that stream flowing, and must of us do, we have to work with others and constantly address issues of “face” and “politeness”.



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## Appendix: A Representative Sample of the Data

### *Extracts from Data 1*

- A. mállám shéhu ká tàfi ábín nán dín nán kó kà cé?  
 B. lállé ná dubà, é, ná tàfi  
 A. ká jí àbín dà yà fàrú kó?  
 B. é ní ná gá ná sámú wàjén dùbú tàrà dà...  
 A. é'?'  
 B. nà wàjén dùbún tàrà dá ...  
 A. mé yé wáí, áí wánnán gyáran án yí? kówá àkà yì mà shí?  
 á'á dúk wándà áddá báshí shí ná dà shí  
 A. dúk wándà áddá báshí?  
 B. wándà àkà círé má sánnán bá'.  
 A. ní bán gáné írín kùxín dà kàkà nùfí bà fà ...  
 B. kámár wándà kó computer kà ánsá kó wàní àbú kàíánsá ...  
 A. é'  
 B. wándà àkà círé má kággámá àná yájín áikí ánkà dáwó àkà cí gábá dá círé má.  
 A. sáí wándà ákà cí gábá dà círé má kó?  
 B. é'  
 A. yáwwá áí ní bán cíkín hákánán shí ámmàtsálá  
 A. dón wánnán wàtán né zán qaré ... ní bán ámsí ... ná fàrkón nán né ná ánsá. wánnán ná computer bá, dùbú sáábáín.  
 B. í ná gáné, ná gáné.  
 A. ká tùná sú kó?  
 B. tó áí ámmá zúwá á yì yájín áikí áná círé má kó?  
 A. í áná círéwá  
 B. sàbódá hàkà ká dái yí checking kà gání  
 A. tó.  
 B. ká fáhíntá dá àbín dá náká nùfí sàbódá áí lókácín nán níkó hár dái wáxánnán dà nán xán nássámú fàrí, ká fáhíntá, àbín dá náká nùfí kó?  
 A. ún éh  
 B. ká fáhíntá dá àbín dà níká nùfí kó?  
 A. é' yájín  
 A. dón kái káná nùfín àkà qaré biyá àkà cì gábá dà círéwá.  
 B. á 'á bán qaré biyá bá. sàbódá ká sán àná yájín áikín, wáxánnán wàtán nán, dákátár dà áká yì dà kómí sáí dà ának dáwó áká cì gábá dà círéwá kó? kóda káddáwó ká gámá biyá kó?  
 A. kówá zái  
 B. kó bá ká gámá biyá bá ákwáí wáxánsú ábúbúwú wáxándá ...  
 A. á 'á bán gáne biyá bá.  
 B. ákwáí ná wáxánnán wàtán xín.  
 A. wáxánná wàtán?  
 B. ná wàtán nàwá né áká biyá kú?  
 A. wàtán February.  
 B. tó ákwáí kùxí dà káká bí ná wánnán wàtán  
 A. nà mé tó?  
 B. nà wánnán wàtán dín dà yà kámátá à círé máká bá á círé máká bá. kó bàká gáné bá?  
 A. tó ní ná gá kùxín dà. nássámú kámár cíkákákín kùxí né ná sámú kó kùxín hàràjí né.  
 B. bá hàràjí ba né.  
 A. wàtáu ná kásá gáné nùfínká wálláhi?  
 B. ábín dà náká sòn ká fáhíntá .....  
 A. é  
 B. lókácín dà múnà yájín áikí bá wàtá hùdú múnká yí bá?  
 A. é

- B. gá wánnán lókácín kàmatá à cé bá mù tii yájin áikí kówánné wàtá án círé bá à círé bá. márúru né? é márúru né yà fito mànì.
- C. á á!
- C. ká gáné kó?
- A. nà'ám é
- B. kàmatá yáyyí àcé dà múnká dáwó dà yájin áikí án báká wáxánnán kùxín àkà... bín kà... dúk án círé, sái yázzám bá à yí hákánán bá sái àkà dáwo sái ákà cí gábá sái àkà bákú wàtán hùxún xín hár wàtán biyár ...
- A. ná gáné
- B. hár wàtán biyár
- A. ná gáné
- B. sàbódá hàká wánnán wàtán káná bín wàni àbú ...
- A. tún dá án círé mán dàgá báya
- B. túndá án círé má dàgá báya.
- A. tó kówá yà jé zá à bá ...
- B. tó kówá wándá áddá báshí hiká tàké ...
- A. tó zán jé kó ín dúbá.
- B. tó sái, ín bá hàká káyyí bá bá ká íyá gánéwá.
- A. wàjén wá àkà dúbáwá?
- B. yánzú má án kámálá ábín Monday zá à biyá, cash payment zai à yi.
- A. ú-n. tó wàjén wá zá á sàni
- B. shímá dái shíná wàjén xán mántó
- A. tó yáwwá sái Monday ké nán  
(Termination).

### Extrácts from Dátá 2

#### (A lost scarf in dispute)

- A. yàrínyár nán dà tà zó dà xányén...à bínká....
- B. bá itá má bá. Ká sán tá núná gáskiyá tá cé bá nàtá bá ná wánnán bá bábbáb màcé ná ámmá yá yi kámá dà nàtá náccé tó kí bári ín yáyyí kwáná biyár sái á baki. kó bá hàká bá àbúbákár?
- C. lállé hàká àkà yí
- B. á á shí wái Ládán Sárkín qúllé-qúllé yággáyá má 'yár fàrar yàrínyár nán wái tà zó tá kàrvá, wái nàtá ná à bá tá.
- A. sái táyyí mistake tàcé mántúwá táyyí.
- B. sái àkà cé íná!
- C. dón bábu mistake kámár tácé tá máncé ... dón bá máncé shí táyyí bá. dón wàsú àbbísá machine kó mótá cé kó machine? sái mùká gá ...
- C. cìkín gwángwàro yáffáxó, cìkín wàtá mótá cìkín gwággwàro yáffáxo. itá tánnúná ádalci á á tó dón Álláh gá shí ... gá shí kù bání. á á itá mántá shí táyyí yár mántúwár úwá tó gá shí kí zó kí xáuká (looking in the girl's direction) ái ní bán sòn háuká bán sòn ráshín gáskiyá. kù núná céwá ká wáyé.

### Change of Topic

- A. kái wálláhi ná gá kúxxíngá bába náirá xári biyát-biyát! kó ní dá dá wáne mùká táshí yí mái qwácé? ámmá bá ká sání bá hàká yáyyí (demonstration)... báyán mótáccán, báyán wàtá mái sháyí sái dá yáddúbá yáyyí tsùgúnné, gá mótár ísá, yáxxáukó sù, sái dá wáni yáyyí hàká ... kó dá mùká tàhó kàzá ... sái yáyyí (laughter)...
- B. áná màgàná ...!  
wàtáu shékàrájyá yájjé gídán àliyu lálábó shi nán (turning in the direction of the person being talked about).
- C. dón Álláh kù ràbú dànì, dón Álláh kù ràbú dà ní ... dón Álláh ... wái bá kù yí wà Álláh? inná lílláhi wá inná íláihí rájì'un! gá kuxxínán, nán álhájí íná gání ... gá náirá hámsín nán...

- D. wái gágáril dán ... yáyá áke yín sárár márké?
- C. bá nì tàkàrdúná ín tái kàdúná, tò ín bá kú bání kú bà wá? (Referring to the request for money earlier made). kú bá mù kù sàmú ládá. tò sái án jímánkú (walking away).
- D. bá kà tàfi bá?
- A. dóftá nà céwá...kà tahi?
- D. á á bá rùwá nái
- A. dóftá ná céwá Álláh yà kiyáyé
- Termination.

### *Extracts From Data 3*

One-to-Many Participation-Conversation.

(Initiating the discourse)

Topic = New Building construction in a Remote residential area inhabited by the addressee

- A. mállám úsmán Yánzú dúk án wùce kú dà gíní kó?
- C. àná kó bàtù!
- B. aí mú yánzú ... (Interrupted)
- C. kùm kómó tsákíyár gàrí.
- C. qwárái kó! qwárái! ámmá kùmá àbín māmákí ná gàní wái hár cán ámmá ... á! á! á! (expressing surprise).
- D. áw, wàxxándá ámmáháuhátá sún fǎrá hánkálí.  
ámmá yánzú bá à mùkú hányá hár wùrín? á... àkwái hányóyí sái dà local hányá né.  
wánnán má gà tá nán tà Rima Radio sún lálácé tá.
- D. bá à wàní gyáráwá. gwámná gáskíyá báì yì máná kómí bá... (Interrupted).
- B. á... tò... bá á kái máì complain bá níká gání.
- D. dúk hányár dá táyyí Rima Radio bá tá qwárái tá bá.
- B. áw ámmán yá kámátá kù xáukí action.
- E. hár dà wáccán...tá gídán dállátú
- B. tá tūdún wàdà?
- E. tá gídán dállátú wálláhi
- B. yá kámátá kù xáukí action... tá tūdún wàdà
- E. kó dón dállátú yá kámátá... (interrupted).
- B. tò yá kámátá kù xáukí action kám. yá kámátá kám kù yì mágáná.
- B. wággá dái kám sún lálácé tá, wállá
- E. kó dón dállátú...
- B. yá kámátá kám kù yì mágáná. kùmá yá tává kái tá wàtáráná zíyártá
- E. qwárái kó.
- F. yá tàbá kái mùkú zíyártá
- B. gídán radio dái, mú kám gá wá mùké.
- Á. zó ká yì mán gyáran qumbá.

This changes the topic and terminates the discourse as well.

## 26. Satirizing Politicians & Public Officers in Nigerian Newspapers

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### 1. Introduction

In recent years, linguists have been studying how language is structured for certain specific communicative roles. The function a particular text is performing in the context of its use is particularly of importance in the modern day study of written and spoken texts. The concern of this work is one of such instances of language, which can be directly interpreted on the basis of its social relevance to the entire society.

The Press is often seen as the watchdog of the society, which uses language as a tool to express its feelings about how the society runs at any particular period. It manipulates the language and employs its power to point at, expose and ridicule the ills of the society and the perpetrators of such ills. Satire, as such device is called, is a writing that is critical of the evil in the society. Satirists employ humour as a tool for achieving their goal of improving the society.

The news media is an area of veritable research for linguists. Of recent, scholars have been exploring how the social structure relates to the discourse structure. The media being a widespread purveyor of talk about the world and our position in it, more linguists are getting interested in studying its language, particularly the language of newspaper. Scholars such as, van Dijk (1988), Bell (1991), Fairclough (2000), Wodak (1989) have done discourse analytic work on the language of the media and the social relevance of the language in the society. These scholars work within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis.

This paper looks at a prominent feature of language, which is creativity, which makes all languages ready to permit the expression of new meanings through the property of language called “openness”. The paper therefore looks at how writers in the newspaper medium manipulate their linguistic skills to achieve their goal as the watchdog of the Nigerian society. Specifically, it looks at the various linguistic devices used in Nigerian newspaper discourse to attack and ridicule corruptive, criminal and scandalous acts in the Nigerian society. Extracts of forms considered to be satirical in the context of their use were elicited from three major Nigerian newspapers - *The Punch*, *Daily Sun* and *The Guardian*. The social, political, historical and pragmatic contexts in which such forms situate play prominent roles in interpreting them and determining their consideration as satires.

### 2. Satire in Language Use

Beyond its use to report the state of affairs among its speakers, language is also used to perform some acts. This is the major assertion of the Speech Acts Theory



(see Austin, 1962). Underlying every language use is the fact that the users intended it to have some effects on the listeners and oftentimes, the speaker tries to get the listeners to recognize this intention. Such intentions include informing, requesting, ordering, warning, and so forth. In addition, language is often used to criticize. Criticism may come in different ways – directly or indirectly, constructively and destructively. Such instances of language use for critical and corrective purposes are deliberate and the users work to get their listeners or readers recognize their purpose. A particular societal or individual act is criticized because it falls short of some standard, which the critic desires that it should reach. Criticisms may be done to ridicule the target by poking fun at such targets. Such criticisms are generally regarded as satire. Thrall, et al. (1960) as quoted in Harris (2004) defines satire as:

A literary manner, which blends a critical attitude with humour and wit to the end that human institutions or humanity may be improved (p. 1)

Likewise, *The Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia* defines satire as

A technique of writing or art which exposes the follies of its Subjects (for example, individuals, institutions, organization or states) to ridicule, often as an intended means of provoking or preventing change

From the two definitions of satire given above, one can identify some specific features:

- it is critical
- it employs wit and humour
- it ridicules the target
- it may be aimed at individuals or institutions
- it is sometimes aimed at improvement or change
- it may also be used to prevent a change

The most important technique of the satirist is “inversion”. Inversion is a device which turns human norms upside down - what is normally expected in such a way that it makes the reader to reflect on the issue. Inversion is often achieved through the use of some literary devices, such as exaggeration, irony, understatement, ambiguity, metaphor, and so forth. For instance, exaggeration is used when something is emphasized in order to make the unseeing see, and the seeing-but-complacent oppose and expunge evil from the society. To simply say people are evil in our age of perversion will be a waste of one’s breath. Satirists have to describe wrong doing by painting a picture of it that men are not familiar with, but which will make them see the need for correction (see Harris, 2004:6).

Despite its use of humour and wit, a satire does not necessarily have the aim of producing laughter like comedy. The satirist presupposes an educated

readership, which will easily be able to discover the implicit morality through the ironic hints used. So, rather than make people laugh, satire makes them reflective on political and economic issues. Harris (2004) identifies two major aims of any satirical writing:

- (a) to make a vice repulsive so that the vice is expunged from the person or society under attack, and
- (b) to make a vice repulsive so that it is removed from the person or society intended to benefit by the attack

The use of satire is one way language users exercise their power through language in order to see the society return to the practice of morality, which the satirist feels has been abandoned. According to Rudolf Ogoo Okonkwo, a Nigerian freelance writer based in New York, “satire thrives on the use of ridicule, irony, and sarcasm, to portray folly and destroy them with mockery”.

A satire can be general in the sense that it is aimed at the entire society and it can also be specific if it is aimed at single specific persons. However, even when the latter is the case, the purpose is the reformation or regeneration of a whole society. It is not all satires that are necessarily corrective. An “abusive” satire does not aim at correcting the target because the satirist views them as incorrigible. So, such targets are attacked and ridiculed in order to dissuade the public from patronizing, approving of, or associating with them. A satire could be written or spoken. Some great examples of written satires are Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* used to satirize royalty, war and human nature, George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, which is a satire on communist dictatorship, Wole Soyinka’s *The Lion and The Jewel*, which takes a critical look at charismatic religious leaders in Nigeria during the 1960s.

### **3. Satirism in the Mass Media in Nigeria**

The mass media is one of the platforms through which writers satirize. Film, newspaper columns, cartoons and comics are some of the media satirists use as platforms for their criticisms. Newspaper cartoonists are known to be great satirists in the Nigerian news media. Despite that cartoons are known to be largely picture-driven, notable Nigerian cartoonists, such as Josy Ajiboye, Akin Lasekan, Bayor Odulana, Ebun Alesinloye, Bisi Ogunbadejo, Sanya Ojikutu, Cliff Ogiugo, to mention a few do not just explore their abilities to create caricature images, but also juxtapose this with their linguistic manipulative skills to convey their messages vividly to readers. So, their humour and wit in cartooning do not flow just from pictures. This agrees with McCloud’s (1993:155) assertion as quoted in Olaniyan (2000:8) that words and pictures are interdependent in cartoons to convey an idea and neither could convey it alone. Our concern in this paper is largely on newspaper writings of regular columnists, both the in-house and guest writers. Some columnists are known to be satirical sometimes in their writings. They include Reuben Abati, Femi Adesina. Dafe Onojovo, Festus Keyamo, Louis

Odion, Basil Okafor, Juliana Francis, and so forth. These writers explore their creative abilities to satirize the ills in the Nigerian society and the perpetrators of these ills.

Satirism is also expressed in the electronic media through soap operas and films. Also, in recent times, some humourists, who are just jesters are emerging to brighten the entertainment industry in the country. They include Gbenga Adeyemi Jnr, Basket Mouth, Okey Bakassi, Ali Baba, to mention just a few. This work however is only interested in satirical expressions in newspapers generally, *i.e.*, the ones in columns and cartoons.

#### 4. Forms and Functions of Satire in Nigerian Newspapers

The data for this study reveal the employment of creative potentials of Nigerian writers and cartoonists. Most of the expressions considered show the writers' manipulation of words through some morphological and lexico-semantic processes to produce the satirical expressions. Understanding enough about what has been going on recently in the society helps the author to recognize the allusions and cultural references in the discourse analyzed. The forms were classified on the basis of the targets of the satire and linguistic processes employed. Three broad categories of targets were identified. We have satires targeted at individuals (specific satire), an institution or a larger group of people (general satire) and individuals, who are considered incorrigible (abusive satire). Most of the forms considered as satirical point straight at groups of people in the society who are seen as failing the society. This group includes mainly the police and the politicians in general. Others made The President and some particular politicians the butt of their humour. Satirists exploit the freedom of expression they enjoy in the democratic dispensation to poke fun at the leaders of the nation including the president and other public office holders. Below are some of the satirical expressions aimed at The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo.

1. *Presidential Media Blasting*
2. *Abachanjo*
3. *Obasanjocracy*
4. *Our Solomon*
5. *Baba*
6. *Chief Aso Rocker*
7. *The Lion in the Villa*

A careful study of these expressions shows that they were meant to ridicule the generally perceived quick temper, authoritarian posture and hardliner's stance of the president in governance. For instance, *Presidential Media Blasting* is a ridicule of the monthly programme organized by The President tagged *Presidential Media Chat*. During the programme, the president entertains questions from listeners from across the country who phone in. Some selected pressmen and women from

different media houses also feature on the programme. On certain occasions, the journalists and some callers had asked questions, which had attracted replies people considered too harsh from The President, hence the use of the word ‘blasting’ in place of ‘chat’ to ridicule the president’s unpleasant reactions at such moments. To corroborate the view of the media on Obasanjo, Femi Adesina wrote in *Saturday Sun* of May 26, a few days to the final exit of The President:

Why should I miss Obasanjo when he finally leaves? Why should I miss a bad tongue, a foul temper, a haughty, huffy man, who pretends to know it all.

The expression *Abachanjo* was meant to paint the picture that the President has a blend of some characters of the late despotic military Head of State, General Sani Abacha. The writer employed the literary device – exaggeration to overemphasize Chief Olusegun Obasanjo’s character. General Sani Abacha was one of Nigeria’s most ruthless military dictators, who nearly transformed himself to a civilian president, but for his sudden death. The writer was trying to make people believe that nothing has changed in Nigeria, even in the democratic period.

*Obasanjocracy* was used to ridicule the kind of government being practised by Olusegun Obasanjo, the president. According to the writer,

This Obasanjo theory of constitutional democracy, however, is divorced from the original version. Therefore, this philosophy of government, this style, this version of democracy can and should be named after the originator, Obasanjo. There is no better epithet to this type of government than Obasanjocracy. Anyone who practices it is called Obasanjocrat. Obasanjocracy is that system of government we have seen in the last seven years, where the constitution is virtually written by Obasanjo, interpreted by Obasanjo and the decision implemented by Obasanjo.

*Sunday Sun* October 15 2006, (p. 44)

The parody was used to point attention of readers to the little respect Obasanjo had for the rule of law, which made his government to flaunt court orders and victimize its perceived enemies through the government agency, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). EFCC is a body saddled with the responsibility of fighting corruption in the nation.

The other four expressions – *Our Solomon*, *Baba*, *Chief Aso Rocker* and *The Lion of the Villa* are used to mock The President’s unyielding posture, overbearing influence, his savouring and ruthless use of power respectively. The expression *our Solomon* was used in a column in *Sunday Punch* of September 4, 2005. According to the writer, The President is described as *our Solomon* an allusion to the biblical King Solomon, because of “his amorous relationship with IMF and the Paris Club”. Also he was so described because he sees himself as “the messiah who is doing Nigeria a favour”. Many of the president’s party men refer to him as

‘Baba’, which in Yoruba means ‘father’. However, in the context of satire, the word is used to ridicule him as a person who believes he has the authority to have the final say in all things, like a typical father in the Yoruba culture. Obasanjo, to the satirist, may not be the appropriate figure to head a nation that is said to be democratizing.

Denunciation of politicians in general in the data are seen in the following expressions:

8. *come and eat government*
9. *Toronto legislators*
10. *Myownisation of power*
11. *executhieves*
12. *politics of the stomach*
13. *militricians*
14. *Minister for Ovation*

Expression 8 ridicules the government as a corrupt one in which politicians see their being in positions of authority as an opportunity to amass wealth for themselves and their families. This is an ironical way of seeing governance in Nigeria – rather than going into government to serve, people go there to “eat” as much as they can from the so-called ‘national cake: the word ‘eat’ here denotes lavishness, squandering and misappropriation of public fund.

The expression *Toronto Legislature* is an allusion to the case of the one time speaker of the Nigerian House of Representatives, who claimed to have graduated for the University of Toronto, but later, this was found to be untrue. Though he later tendered a public apology, this discovery brought a great ridicule to the law makers. Since then, anything considered not to be genuine especially in the political circles is tagged *Toronto*. Fake certificates are also humorously referred to as *Toronto certificates*.

The expression *myownisation of power* was used by Matthew Hasan Kukah, a catholic priest, who is also a social critic in an article published in *The Guardian* of August 28, 2005. This was used to refer to the personalisation of power by those who have access to it. Some of such instances in which people personalize power are seen in cases of politicians appointing their close relatives, such as brothers, cousins, and even their own children to serve as their aides and to serve in public corporations, which such politician have the privilege of constituting. To corroborate this, Felix Ofou wrote an article in *The Sunday Sun* of July 20, 2003 titled *Democracy: Government by the family*. It was once reported that a governor in one of the South Western states appointed his own younger brother as his chief-of-staff. Likewise, a big party executive appointed his wife and daughter as members of board of some government agencies, which he was overseeing.

The words *executhieves* is a creation of the writer, which came about as a result of a blend of the words *executive* and *thieves*. It was used to ridicule the executive arm of the government, which parades corrupt people, who have



enriched themselves from the government's coffers. *Politics of the stomach* also ridicules corrupt enrichment of political office holders.

Nigerians have been worried about the increase in the number of retired members of the armed forces going into politics. The top members of the ruling party are either retired military or policemen. For instance, the president, the party chairman, some members of the board of trustee, some lawmakers, governors, and so forth. This must have prompted the Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka, a strong critic of Obasanjo's administration to coin this word *militricians*. The word is a blend of the words *military* and *politicians*. The expression was meant to ridicule military men in politics, who are not really seen as politicians because they do not necessarily want power in order to serve, but to rule. The word is meant to paint ex-armed forces men as misfits in a democracy, as they still carry over their military ideas into governance in a democracy

The last of the expressions – *Minister for Ovation* was used to ridicule Chief Femi Fani-Kayode, who was redeployed from the Federal Ministry of Culture and Tourism to the Federal Ministry of Aviation to replace Prof. Babalola Borisade, whose tenure as minister witnessed series of plane crashes in the country. Chief Fani-Kayode was one time a spokesman for the president. He was however, considered to be “too loud” in his defence of the government. The cartoonist who coined this expression employed the literary device pun to poke fun at the minister, that instead of him being referred to as the *Minister for Aviation*, a more appropriate title is *Minister for Ovation*.

The era of campaign for the elections of 2007 witnessed series of political lampooning by party opponents using the newspaper medium. Two major political parties – Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Action Congress (AC) were at the forefront. The parties placed adverts in major newspapers satirizing candidates and their parties. The ruling party, PDP was determined to win the elections in Lagos State, a state known to be the stronghold of one of their opposition. The party's governorship candidate Senator Musiliu Obaníkòró was one of the subjects of constant lampooning by the opposition party, AC. One of the adverts lampooning him is reproduced below:

Corrosive      [KÒRÓ: SIVE]  
Having the quality of consuming or eating away

“DON'T MAKE LAGOS KOROSIVE”

The word ‘Kòró’ is taken from ‘Obaníkòró’, the name of the candidate of PDP. It is also his nickname. What the satirist simply did was to play on the word ‘kòró’ which also sounds like the first segment in the word ‘corrosive’. The picture painted of the candidate, Obaníkòró, is that he has the “quality of consuming or eating away” the resources of Lagos State.

A word that is written like it but pronounced differently in the Yoruba language, the major language in the South Western Nigeria is ‘korò’, and it means



‘bitter’. The opponents of PDP were fond of using the slogan “Kòró korò”, meaning Kòró is bitter. At a point, Obaníkòró’ had to reply the opponents with an advert in the newspaper. See the advert below:

WE HAVE HEARD THEM SAYS  
KÒRÓ KORÒ (KÒRÓ IS BITTER)  
YES, INDEED  
THE TRUTH IS BITTER  
VOTE OUT DECEIT AND FRAUD  
- SENATOR MUSILIU OBANIKORO

In this advert, Obaníkòró saw himself as a personification of truth, using the old adage ‘truth is bitter’ to argue this out. By his submission, his opponents were considered as symbols of deceit and fraud.

Another advert used to ridicule Obaníkòró in most of the national dailies is the one put in form of a prayer. In this advert, there was a bold praying hand and the following was written under it:

MAY MY FUTURE NOT BE KORODED  
MAY IT BE A BRIGHTER REWARDING FUTURE, AMEN

This advert has two prayers - a prayer of rejection and a prayer of acceptance. In the first prayer, there is a play on the word *corrode* deliberately distorting the spelling of the past form as ‘koroded’. Even though the name of Senator Obaníkòró was not mentioned at all in the advert, readers’ familiarity with the field, allusions, issues and cultural references made it possible for them to be able to decode the content and interpret the advert to be referring to the senator. The understanding of an average Nigerian about what has been going on and the reality that is assumed to be widespread in the society at that particular time helps in the interpretation. The second prayer is a prayer accepting a Brighter Rewarding Future. The first letters of each of the three words brighter, rewarding and future were foregrounded and coincidentally, those letters also represent the initials of the candidate of Action Congress (AC), the party that placed the advert. The AC candidate is Babatunde Raji Fashola (BRF). This again presupposes certain stock of knowledge to get what the message was driving at. The message focused on the future and saw a brighter future for the people of Lagos State in Fashola, the AC candidate, while it sees a corroded future in Obanikoro, the PDP candidate.

Another advert used to deride other parties by satirizing them is reproduced below.

Vote Possibilities. Vote Opportunities  
Not Probability, Not Promises, Not Excuses, Not Thuggery  
Not Mediocrity, Not Arson, Not Violence, Not Lip Service  
Not Depression Permanently Allowed

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Not Punishment Depressingly Present  
Not Lies Perpetuated

The principal method of satire used in this advert is distortions of the names of major opposition parties in Lagos State. Just like in other adverts, these distortions were cleverly done. However, readers are still able to recognize the distortions and what they alluded to. The last three lines refer to the three major opposition parties in the State:

- Democratic Peoples Alliance (DPA) alluded to as Depression Permanently Allowed.
- Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) alluded to as Punishment Depressingly Present.
- Labour Party alluded to as Lies Perpetuated.

Another advert that used this method is the one targeted at PDP, reproduced below:

Say No to the Satanic  
POWER OF DARKNESS PERMANENTLY

In this advert, the ruling party was described as ‘satanic’, and the name was distorted to reflect this. This may also be connected with the inability of the ruling party to handle the power generation crisis that the nation has been facing. Irregular supply of electricity has thrown many parts of the country into ‘permanent darkness’ for many days and weeks sometimes. This advert is calling on the voters to reject the ruling party because of inability supply electricity to the nation.

The Nigerian Police is one of the ready targets of satirists. One major means of ridiculing the police is irony. Some of the expressions used to satirize them are: *kill and go*, (describing their indiscriminate killing of innocent people), *wetin you carry* (Nigerian Pidgin English for “what do you have with you” or “what do you have for us?”) Describing their demand for bribe from motorists, particularly commercial vehicles drivers), *wey your particulars* (Nigerian Pidgin English for “where are your particulars?”) This is the usual questions they pose to motorists whenever they stop them on the highway), *uniformed crooks*, and *men in black* (describing their uniform, which is black). Their readiness to demand for and accept bribe is also ridiculed by using these expressions:

toll collection, highway honorarium, illicit trade.

A write up in Cocktail Circuit in *The Guardian on Sunday* of November 28, 2004 (p. 49) paints this picture of the Nigerian Police:

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Wonders indeed will never end. At a time Nigerians are praying that something drastic will happen to take corrupt Nigerian Police out of their lives, the Republic of Benin Police Command has requested Nigeria to dispatch our *men in black* to help in cleansing their land of robbers and anti-law.

This write-up shows how hopeless Nigerians feel on the inability of the Police to combat crime. It is an irony that the police who cannot effectively fight crime in Nigeria are being invited to Benin Republic to help them fight crime.

On one occasion when a naval officer shot at a close range a motorcyclist, who scratched his car while trying to maneuver through the typical Lagos traffic congestions. The motorcyclist died on the spot. A newspaper columnist wrote this to satirize the brutal murder of innocent Nigerians by men of the armed forces: “the monopoly of policemen for killing innocent people at checkpoints has been broken”. It was because that time around, the killing was not done by the police but by a naval office.

Institutions, especially political parties, government agencies, and sometimes, private institutions are also ridiculed by satirists. The major device used here is to substitute their names with distorted ones, purposed to ridicule them in such a way that the new name appears to be saying exactly the opposite of what they represent. Such names are still represented by their well-known acronyms. Examples of these are:

15. Peoples Demolition Party (PDP) in place of Peoples Democratic Party
16. Alliance for Disappearance (AD) in place of Alliance for Democracy
17. Annual Deadly Crashes (ADC) in place of Aviation Development Company
18. Power Hoarders Company of Nigeria (PHCN) in place of Power Holding Company of Nigeria

These expressions paint the picture of the exact opposite of what these institutions stand for. For instance, PHCH (Power Holdings Company of Nigeria), which is the government agency, which ought to generate electricity for the nation has failed in the assignment, as many communities suffer unstable electricity supply or total blackout for days and sometimes weeks. So, the agency is ridiculed through the use of irony as hoarders of power rather than supplier of power. There is also a play on word here – the words *hold* and *hoard* do not just have similarity in sound, they are also similar in basic/core meaning. However, while the word ‘hold’ has a neutral meaning, ‘hoard’ has a negative connotation.

Likewise, ADC is the name of an airline, whose plane crash-landed in October 2006, leaving 97 people, including some prominent Nigerians, dead. The expression *Annual Deadly Crashes* sounds like an exaggeration because the series of crashes witnessed by the country involved different airlines. This however drives a point home through ridicule – that the crashes are just too frequent in recent times

One of the most biting satires of the ruling party PDP was the one expressed in the following words: “it takes a goat to declare for PDP to become a governor”. This abusive lampooning of PDP tells the reader how the writer of this piece felt about the quality of person in the ruling party and the overall integrity of the party. This is clearly an abusive satire, as the attack was too sharp and aggressive. A writer’s mood determines how mild or sharp they sound in their satire

The nation’s economy and government policies are not also spared by satirists. In *Daily Sun* of December 24, 2004 (p.9), the Nigerian economy was described as *okada driven economy*. Robbers’, fraudsters’ and area boys’, pipeline vandals’ activities were subtly justified, as what they do was referred to as *resource appropriation*. As Government ‘allocates’ resources, these victims of bad economic policies (the unemployed, who decided to go into robbery, swindling, etc, for livelihood) ‘appropriate’ resources, *i.e.*, taking something without asking for permission. So, there is *allocation of resources* by the government and there is *appropriation of resources* by these criminals.

One writer also used the expression *deregulation of poverty* to paint the pathetic picture of the increase in the number of people in the poverty brackets in the country. Deregulation is an economic policy the Nigerian government embarked upon as part of her economic reforms. By deregulating, the government withdraws her control in most of her corporations and allows the market forces to determine the prices of commodities, hence, the expression “deregulation of petroleum prices”. Deregulation of poverty is used to expose the government’s inability to provide for the Nigerians, thereby leaving the people below the poverty level in a very miserable condition. Rather than preventing poverty by controlling the economy, the government was seen as encouraging it through its policies.

On the basis of linguistic processes used to convey the satirical expression identified in the data, two major processes were identified – morphological and lexico-semantic processes.

The two morphological processes are blending and acronyms.

#### *Blending*

|               |                         |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| Militicians   | military + politicians  |
| Executhieves  | executive + thieves     |
| Kleptocracy   | kleptomania + democracy |
| Abachanjo     | Abacha + Obasanjo       |
| Obasanjocracy | Obasanjo + democracy    |

#### *Acronyms*

|      |                                   |
|------|-----------------------------------|
| CAR  | Chief Aso Roker                   |
| PDP  | Peoples Demolition Party          |
| ADC  | Annual Deadly Crashes             |
| AD   | Alliance for Disappearance        |
| PHCH | Power Hoarders Company of Nigeria |

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The lexico-semantic processes include the following:

- Metaphor:* Our Solomon  
The Lion in the Villa  
Maradona
- Pun:* resource appropriation  
Minister for Ovation  
Deregulation of poverty  
Korosive, koroded
- Connotation:* Toronto Legislators  
Toll collection
- Conversion:* kill and go  
Mr Know it all
- Allusion:* Depression Permanently Allowed  
Lies Perpetuated  
Punishment Depressingly Present

## **5. Conclusion**

In this work, language has been seen as a very powerful tool in the hands of newspaper writers and cartoonists. Apart from providing news about the society, newspapers writers also help the readers to reflect on the society and seek ways to improve it. Through the use of satire, writers ridicule the evil in the society, such as corruption, crime and scandal. We have been able to show in this work, how through the manipulation of language, satirists poke fun at public office holders and institutions. One major implications of the use of satire is that it keeps the targets of these satires on their toes because they are aware that they are being watched and could be ridiculed. It makes the readership to learn from the mistakes of their leaders.

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## **27. Innovation & Creativity in Language Use: A Study of the Language of SMS Text Messages**

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The SMS (Short Message Service) text messages have enjoyed overwhelming popularity among mobile phone users around the world. It is a major artifact where English is used frequently. In this paper, we have examined the ways in which the English Language is used in this medium. Linguistic features that are innovative and creative in SMS text messages have been identified. We have also asserted the validity of these linguistic features. However, we have made the thrust of this paper to revolve around word formation since it is the dominant linguistic feature of this medium. Opinions from various sources ranging from linguists, language experts to common reference materials, such as the Dictionary were examined. In all these features highlighted and discussed, it is glaring that the English language, as it is used in SMS text messages, is valid, gaining currency and is a diatopic variety of the 21<sup>st</sup> century English, despite its informality, heavy dose of abbreviations, and its coded nature. It is therefore suggested that English, as used in SMS text messages, should be viewed as relevant in our linguistic environment and as a creolizing blend of especially written discourse.

### **1. Introduction**

SMS (short message service) is one invention that has generated a lot of discussions, worry and concern among linguists, especially within the English language circle. Messages are constantly being sent to various mobile phones either for social interactions, educational purposes or for strictly formal notifications for interviews, meetings, appointments and many other formal events. Studies have also revealed that this indispensable technology is enjoying great patronage among teenagers in the west especially, among youths around the world and remarkably among young professionals. This wide patronage by these peer groups is as a result of the low tariff it attracts. The development of SMS messages around the world is remarkable. As at mid-2004, the rate of SMS messages sent stood at 500 billion messages per annum (cf. Wikipedia 2006). The language popularly used is the English Language. Reasons are that the phones are built with dictionaries to facilitate appropriate usages. The question is where arises the coded language and the creolizing blend? Linguists believe that it is a peer thing and more so that the medium also contributes since it functions mostly in informal situations (examples buses, rooms, restaurants, etc.).

Again due to the need to conserve space, most of the text messages are coded, abbreviated and sentences are written in unusual syntactic order; for instance the dropping of articles, the omissions of linguistic signpost like commas, question marks among others.

In the rest of the paper, we shall discuss and investigate the language of SMS text messages with the aim of showing that the English language is evolving a new variety as far as the written medium is concerned. We shall go further to show that this language is gaining currency and popularity. Efforts will also be made to analyze some SMS text messages to classify the corpus data collected into the various linguistic forms noticeable in this medium of communication.

To consolidate the concept of a new variety of English in SMS text messages, we shall also indicate how dictionaries have accepted the codes/ language of SMS text messages. Mention will be made of sources and dictionaries that have been compiled specifically to aid understanding of new codes and words as they are used in SMS messages.

## 2. Language, Code, Innovation and Creativity

### 2.1 Language Mediums and Types

Human language, precisely natural language, is the most astounding of human's endowment. However, scholars are also not in doubt of the fact that speech predates writing especially as studies of the various languages of the world have revealed. Moreover some languages still exist at the speech medium and are yet to develop a writing system. However writing seeks to capture graphically all that humans communicate in speech. Hence lexicographers have the duty of putting down all that has been generated at the spoken level and even at the written form. For Gimson (1980:4-5) 'Language is a system of conventional signals used in communication by a whole community'.

From Gimson's definition above, it is possible to see that language is a system' (spoken and written), which has "conventional signals" (signs, utterances and graphics), which a community uses and accepts. It therefore follows that if a system of signals or signs is developed, and a group of people accept it and use it, then possibly, a language has been generated. Perhaps this holds for the coded language of SMS text messages.

Eka & Udofot (1996:7) classify language into two mediums: spoken or Aural Medium and written or visual medium. These two mediums are quite important and are in fact merged when using SMS text messages. Ellul (2005:1) shows this similarity when she comments on text message, thus:

**Grammar:** With regard to lexicon, electronic mail resembles speech in that it uses first and second person pronouns.

**Syntax:** As regards syntax it is similar to both speech and writing.

### 2.2 Codes and the SMS

Emoticons a new word coined from 'emotions' and 'icons' are frequently used in this medium as codes and ways of saying things that would have been expressed in speech as gestures. This type of paralinguistic feature in SMS text messages is stressed by Katamba, in his book *English words*<sup>1</sup> as a feature which bridges the gap between spoken and written language:

... emoticons, are a way of expressing emotions and attitudes, through the use of ordinary characters found in the keyboard for example :-)

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‘happy’, :-0 ‘surprised’, :-D ‘laughing’, :- (‘crying’, %-) ‘confused’,;-) ‘winking’ and X-) ‘angry’.

Also, Gibbon and Kul (2006) view emoticon as similar with logographic writing style.

Codes are necessary in this form of communication due to the limited space and sometimes time. Codes enhance innovation and creativity in this medium as we shall see below. As indicated above, the use of those symbols and punctuation marks or linguistic sign-post are quite new and very creative for the meanings they convey. Kasesniemi & Rautiainen in ‘Mobile Culture of Children and teenagers in Finland’<sup>2</sup> identifies the idea of text message language and codes when they write:

[Text -] messages often bear more resemblance to code than to standard language expression is not necessarily accessible to an outsider. The unique writing style provides opportunities for creativity-

The entire variety of English Language of text messages actually aids and even enhances creativity in language use. It also gives room for the use of codes to convey messages in very limited space.

### 2.3 Innovation, Productivity and ‘Open-Endedness’

Languages usually respond to the new needs of a society or medium which it is used. Despite the fact that language is conventional, it caters for new situations as well as new objects. Perhaps this is why Yule (1996:23) writes that “With adults, new situations arise or new objects have to be described, so the language-users manipulate their linguistic resources to produce new expressions and new sentences”. Hence linguists have come to view this ingenuity as productivity or creativity or yet still ‘open-endedness’.

Perhaps one of the new situation or better still new medium which has encouraged this manipulation of linguistic resources to generate new words and codes for communication is the mobile phone.

The predominant method of creativity in SMS messages is very different from what we see in other mediums of communication. We also observe that they are basically two types of creativity, namely rule-governed and rule-bending (cf. Udofot 1999:94). The recurring types of linguistic coding devices are rule-bending as they do not follow strictly the word formation processes. Therefore we may not always find SMS codes or words in dictionaries and everyday language. This is why Matthews (1991:70) writes that “... it is of the nature of creativity that it will always run ahead of what is in the dictionaries”. Fortunately, Lexicographers are already on hand with inputs or actual compilations to reflect the lexicon of SMS messages.

### 3. SMS and Word-Formation

There are common core-features in text messages that have received attention and devoted research studies. These features though described in various ways are similar in a lot of ways. Awonusi (2004:45ff) has noted the following linguistic features in SMS text messages:

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Phonetic representations, Orthographic conventions/representations (total abbreviation, partial abbreviations, telegraphic forms), grammatical peculiarities (punctuation peculiarities, informal language contractions, text multilingualism and discourse structure.

Awonusi's approach seems to pay more attention to socio-linguistic items than features of creativity and innovation in the language used in SMS text messages. A second classification which reflects new linguistic forms in the language of text messages together with innovation and creativity is given by Thurlow (2006:6);

- a. Shortenings, contractions and G-clippings and other clippings
- b. Acronyms and initialisms
- c. Letter/number homophones
- d. misspellings
- e. Non-conventional spellings and
- f. Accent stylizations

According to 'Mob ed' (2006:8), three types are readily noticeable in text-messages: acronyms, 'rebus'<sup>3</sup> and suppression. Gibbon and Kul (2006:16) have listed six coding devices which stand out in the medium: full words, truncation, initialization, vowel deletion, alphanumeric homophone and logographic ASCII emoticons.

For the purpose of this work, we shall evolve a linguistic classification that captures the major features of linguistic forms in SMS text messages as collected within Nigeria and from Nigerian participants.

#### **4. Collection of Data**

In order to follow research procedures, data was obtained from 20 participants. In all, participants or texters gave 130 text messages for the research work. From the messages, we were able to extract a total of 117 corpus of data for the analysis and classification into groups of linguistic forms.

##### **4.1 Analysis/Data Classification**

In analyzing the data, we grouped the findings into the various linguistic forms that they fit. Explanation is also given where necessary to aid understanding.

##### **4.1.1 Shortenings, contractions and G-Clippings**

Shortenings are common features in SMS text messages. They include all those words that are shortened; yet their meanings are still observable. Dictionaries sometimes refer to them as abbreviations.

##### *Shortenings*

|      |   |            |     |   |          |
|------|---|------------|-----|---|----------|
| Uni  | = | University | Mon | = | Monday   |
| Lab  | = | Laboratory | Min | = | Minute   |
| Bro  | = | Brother    | Vid | = | Video    |
| Lec  | = | Lecture    | Bro | = | Brother  |
| Sis  | = | Sister     | Lan | = | Language |
| Proj | = | Project    |     |   |          |

Contractions do not necessarily follow a unique pattern as is found in shortening, where the first syllable is retained. In this case any parts of the letters of words are put together to create words or signs that evoke meaning.

#### *Contractions*

|     |   |         |       |   |          |
|-----|---|---------|-------|---|----------|
| Yr  | = | Year    | Wk    | = | Week     |
| Bk  | = | Back    | Spk   | = | Speak    |
| Ply | = | Play    | B day | = | Birthday |
| MSG | = | Message | Txt   | = | Text     |
| Cld | = | Could   | Mt    | = | Meet     |
| Abt | = | About   | Mk    | = | Make     |
| Pls | = | Please  | Weda  | = | Weather  |
| Frm | = | From    |       |   |          |

G-Clippings are created when the last sound in a word example /g/ or more precisely the last letter in a word is dropped.

#### *G-clippings*

|         |   |          |         |   |          |
|---------|---|----------|---------|---|----------|
| Goin    | = | Going    | Thinkin | = | Thinking |
| Drivin  | = | Driving  | Hurtin  | = | Hurting  |
| Lookin  | = | Looking  | Waitin  | = | Waiting  |
| Stoppin | = | Stopping |         |   |          |

#### **4.1.2 Acronyms and Initialisms**

Acronyms were also noticed in the corpus. It should be noted that most dictionaries and books presently recognize acronyms as part of the language of SMS text messages; this will be discussed later. However the following were found in the data.

#### **Acronyms/Initialisms**

|     |   |            |     |   |                  |
|-----|---|------------|-----|---|------------------|
| R   | = | Are        | Y   | = | Why              |
| BTW | = | By the way | CID | = | Consider it done |
| U   | = | You        |     |   |                  |

#### **4.1.3 Letter / Number Homophones or ‘Rebus’**

|         |   |          |        |   |           |
|---------|---|----------|--------|---|-----------|
| 2       | = | To       | 4      | = | For       |
| Gr8     | = | Great    | 4 eva  | = | Forever   |
| 2 morro | = | Tomorrow | 2nite  | = | Tonight   |
| 4 get   | = | Forget   | 1daful | = | Wonderful |

#### **4.1.4 Non-Conventional Spellings**

|      |   |        |       |   |        |
|------|---|--------|-------|---|--------|
| Pple | = | People | Tanks | = | Thanks |
| Hapi | = | Happy  | Boro  | = | Borrow |
| Bcom | = | Become | Wit   | = | With   |
| Wat  | = | What   | D     | = | The    |
| Ur   | = | Your   | Luv   | = | Love   |



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|         |   |            |          |   |              |
|---------|---|------------|----------|---|--------------|
| Fone    | = | Phone      | Swt drms | = | Sweet dreams |
| Gd nite | = | Good night | Tit      | = | Tight        |
| Enta    | = | Enter      | Dem      | = | Them         |
| Pls     | = | Please     |          |   |              |

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#### 4.1.4 Suppression of Vowels/Accent Stylization

|     |   |        |     |   |         |
|-----|---|--------|-----|---|---------|
| Thx | = | Thanks | Msg | = | Message |
| Thn | = | Then   | Txt | = | Text    |

## 4.2 Discussion

So far, we have classified the corpus of data obtained into the various groupings of linguistic features. One intriguing feature is the concept of 'rebus' or letter/number homophones. The same concept is identified by Awonusi (2004:54) when he talks about alphanumeric conventions (combination of letters and numerals). This feature is very innovative as it allows for limited characters of numbers and letters to be utilized to convey meaning in text messages.

Acronyms/initialism and G-Clippings are also creative features. They conserve space, and seem to bear semblance with units used in other informal mediums of writing and communication. Acronyms before now, were recognized and used widely in the English Language.

Suppression of vowels/accent stylization is a remarkable usage in text messages. We notice that words used in this manner have letters representing vowel sounds dropped.

Features, which call for concern and show enormous irregularities, are contractions and non-conventional spellings. However units like this are still employed. Perhaps it is one of the reasons why lexicographers and linguists are working out standard usages for SMS text message. If this is done properly, and texters have access to them, we probably would consolidate these features as well as standardize them.

A point to mention is that formal usages were rarely observed. Even when they occur, no striking linguistic innovation or creativity were noticed.

## 5. Standardizing SMS Text Message Language

### 5.1 Restrictions and Inaccessibility to Non-Initiates

An essentially axiom which should not be overlooked is that decoding SMS Messages could sometimes be difficult to texters. Gibbon and Kul (2006:6ff) have described it as channel constraints. Using the functional model of Grice and Jakobson, they show how SMS messages defy the conversational maxims of manner spelt out by Grice (that is avoiding ambiguity and obscurity, being brief and orderly). Also to them from Jakobson's schemata of the functional model, SMS messages through the codes used constrain the messages as sent to the receiver.

All these limitations notwithstanding, initiates to the codes usually decode SMS messages with slight ease. Moreover as the codes emanate, so is their spread sustained. Following statistics of SMS messages usually sent annually it is not difficult for these codes to be widely circulated.

## 5.2 Validation and Codification

As earlier indicated many linguists have written articles, books and memos in support of the language of SMS text messages. Worthy of note is David Crystal, a professor of linguistics, who has written a whole book on the subject. Crystal is noted to have observed that ‘SMS text message is the greatest opportunity for the development of the English language since the advent of the printing press in the middle ages’ (textually’ 2006).

‘Mob ed’ (2006) also indicates that SMS text messages is used in CALL (computer Assisted language learning) in the UK. Duncan (2003:1) supports SMS language when he writes:

It’s the perfect communication method for the busy modern lifestyle. Like email before it, the text message has altered the way we write in English, bring more abbreviations and a more lax approach to language construction. Traditional rules of grammar and spelling are much less important when you’re sitting on the bus, hurriedly typing ‘will B 15 min late – CU @ the bar. (Sorry! :-).

Dictionaries have also emerged to regulate and codify the language of SMS. *WAN2TALK* was written by Gabrielle Mandeer to enhance creativity in writing SMS text messages. *Teach UR Mum 2 TXT*<sub>2</sub> is also another dictionary for this purpose.

The *Oxford Dictionary* has been leading in the project of codifying the language of SMS text messages. The concise Oxford Dictionary has devoted an entire subsection to the language of ‘text Messaging’ as they call it. Middleton (2001:1) has indicated the following usage as some that could be found in the dictionary:

BBLR (be back later)

HAND (have a nice day)

Emoticons like :) (happy), :( (sad) and ;) (checky).

*The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* has also contributed to evolving a language for text messaging. An online source (2005:9) writes that:

The dictionary in fact explains that text messages, chat room messages and sometimes emails can be written using the smallest number of letters possible.

Acronyms like the following could be found in the dictionary:

ATB – all the best, KIT – keep in touch,

CUL8R – see you later, B4N – Bye for now.

## 6. Conclusion

The study has observed that SMS text messages have evolved a language system that is informal yet relevant. The study has also shown the various linguistic features that are dominant in this sort of English. Citing linguists and dictionaries, we have observed that this language is relevant and is gaining credence; it may

therefore be considered a valid type of language as far as the informal medium of communication is concerned.

### Notes

1. Francis Katamba's Book *English Words* is referred to by Ellul (2005:1).
2. Thurlow (2006) has referred to the article by Kasesniemi, E & Rautiainen, P, 'Mobile Culture of Children and teenagers in Finland'.
3. 'Rebus' as found in Crystal's book *Language and the Internet*, is defined as, "... something in which the sound value of the letter or number acts as a symbol for a word". This could be found in the article 'Mob ed'.

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## 28. Dynamics of Language: The Yoruba Example

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Language is a critical element in the education process. It is an instrument of thought, an expression of a people's culture and a veritable instrument for accessing knowledge and other forms of human development. Language possesses certain characteristic features, one of which is its dynamism. This paper explored the various factors which make language dynamic: official status accorded the language, languages in contact and creativity of the artist. The paper concluded by highlighting the implications of language dynamism.

### **Introduction**

Language plays an important role in the lives of people in any given society. No human society can do without language. However, language means different things to different people depending on what use they employ language to achieve. This accounts for the variations that could be noticed from the ways sociologists, philosophers, psychologists, and scientist would define language.

Bolinger (1970) sees language as a system of vocal auditory communication, interacting with experiences of its users, employing conventional signs, arbitrarily patterned sound, units and assembled according to set rules. This means that language is patterned systematically, it expresses a people's culture, reflects a speaker's experience and that it helps in communicating intended message.

Language is a principal medium of communication which is mutually intelligible to members of a given society. According to Crystal (1971) language makes civilization possible. There is no doubt that language facilitates meaningful interaction, communication and social processes among people of a given speech community. Stock and Widdowson (1979) in Kolawole (2003) believe that language is human specific and that language is a creation of man to meet his social needs. These authors also identified other characteristics of language which include: arbitrariness, dynamism, creativity, displacement, self-perpetration, conventional and duality of patterning.

One of these characteristic features of language 'dynamism' has actually influenced the writing of this paper. Language is an organic phenomenon whose dynamic growth from day to day and from age to age defies the most astute scholarly dissection (Ogunsiji, 2001).

Language is said to be dynamic in that it is capable of growth and it changes in order to reflect social realities and new ideas. Thus, every human language grows, expands, accommodates new coinages, new ideas and concepts. The corollary is true in that any language that fails to grow fossilizes and dies (Kolawole, 2003).

Lamidi (2000) notes that language is a versatile tool that is capable of being used for different purposes. According to him, happenings in the society bring

about the incorporation of new words into a language as old ones die out. Therefore, words like

... dialogue, annul, June 12, NADECO, power shift, and restructuring are recent additions/loans to the vocabularies of the three major indigenous languages and even to the so called Nigerian English (Lamidi, 2000:109).

Language is no doubt capable of growing and it is also subject to perpetual changes.

### **Dynamism in the Yoruba language**

Yoruba is one of the three major Nigerian languages recognized in the National Policy of Education (2004). Indigenous languages in Nigeria number about 500 but the choice of three major ones must have been borne out of the consideration that each of the three, Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba represents the language of wider communication in its region (i.e. Igbo in the East, Hausa in the North and Yoruba in the South-western region. (Makinde, 2005).

In Nigeria, the mother tongue or language of immediate community is expected to be the medium of instruction in the pre-primary and first three years of primary education. From primary four to six as well as in Junior Secondary School, that language is expected to be taught as a subject (NPE, 2004). Yoruba language enjoys all these in the southwestern part of Nigeria except that in most private schools and some public schools, the language provisions of the NPE are not implemented. Even in other parts of Nigeria, Yoruba language is expected to be taught as L<sub>2</sub> at the Junior Secondary School level but the implementation has always been limited to the Federal Secondary Schools, due to dearth of teachers.

The teaching of Nigerian languages, as L<sub>2</sub> is not limited to Nigeria. Some universities in the United States of America run L<sub>2</sub> programmes on selected African languages including Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba thus enhancing the status of the languages (Makinde, 2005).

Apart from the fact that Yoruba language is given the status of a major language in Nigeria, it is also being used as a medium of instruction and as well as an instructional area right from the primary to the tertiary institutions. By implication, this means that books and other educational materials would be produced in the language. This writer identifies other things that make the language to be dynamic.

### **Contact with other languages**

Languages come in contact when speakers of such languages come together for commercial, religious, educational, marital purposes or for other social interactions. Such interactions bring about the borrowing of concepts or words from one language into the other. Borrowing words or concepts from other languages into a living language brings about the expansion of vocabulary in that language (Bello, 2001).

Examples abound of English, Arabic, Hausa and Hebrew words which have found their way into Yoruba through lexical borrowing. Lexical borrowing might involve having morphemes to undergo some morphological changes in order to make such words conform to the rules of word formation in the language doing

the borrowing. Lexical borrowing could be in the form of loanwords which involve a complete transfer of morphemes and meanings from a language into another with some phonological moderations: loan shift or creation which refers to the extension of the meaning of a word to some other concepts (Bello, 2001).

Examples of loanwords are English lexical items borrowed into Yoruba:

|     | <i>English</i> | <i>Yoruba</i> |
|-----|----------------|---------------|
| (a) | ball           | bóòlu         |
| (b) | radio          | redio         |
| (c) | table          | tebu/tabili   |
| (d) | street         | titi          |
| (e) | marriage       | márédè        |
| (f) | peculiar mess  | pẹnkẹlẹ-méèsi |

Example of loan shift from English to Yoruba is the English word ‘railway’. In the donor language, ‘railway’ refers to tracks or routes for train but in Yoruba usage, it means the train itself. This is expressed in such sentences like:

- (i) ‘Onimu faa fòò bí i reluwé fọn mú’  
(The one whose nostrils are large like the horn of a train)
- (ii) ‘Mo fẹ lọ wọ reluwé’  
(I want to go and board the train)

Malik (1995) highlighted Arabic loanwords in Yoruba language as used in poetry/songs, news bulletin, advertisement, and in the Yoruba translation of the Holy Bible. Few examples would be cited here.

*Examples of loanwords used in Yoruba poems:* (Loanwords are italicised in these examples)

- (a) Má fi èpè yẹ *kádàrá* ọmọ  
Don’t change the child’s destiny with curse  
(Arabic: *qadar* - destiny or fate)
- (b) Ẹ *túúba* nínú isé ibi  
Repent of evil deeds  
(Arabic: *taubah* – repentance)

*Examples of loanwords in Yoruba News Broadcast*

- (a) Komísánnà Adedója se *sàdánkátà* sí ilé isé Redio O-Y-O fun isé dáadáa rẹ  
Commissioner Adedója commended Radio O-Y-O for its truth and sincerity.  
(Arabic: *sadaqta* – you have spoken the truth: you have been sincere)



*Loanwords used in Radio Advertisements*

- (a) È yéé gba *ribá* mọ  
Stop taking bribe  
(Arabic: *ribá* – usury, bribe)
- (b) È yéé jẹ *màkàrùrù*  
Stop engaging in dishonest act)  
(Arabic: *makruh* – detested thing or dishonest act)

*Loanwords in Yoruba Bible*

- (a) “Gbọ *àdúrà* mi, Oluwa”  
“Hear my prayer, O Lord”  
(Arabic: *ad-du’-á* – prayer)
- (b) “Awọn *kèfèrì* mbiú”  
“The nation’s rage”  
(Arabic: *káfir* – unbeliever, infidel)
- (Malik, 1995:424-439)

Hebrew names in the English version of the Holy Bible undergo some phonological transformations in the Yoruba version. Few examples are herewith considered:

|           |   |          |
|-----------|---|----------|
| Abraham   | – | Abrahamu |
| Mary      | – | Maria    |
| Moses     | – | Mose     |
| Shadack   | – | Sadraki  |
| Meshak    | – | Mésáki   |
| Zaccheaus | – | Sakeu    |

**Creativity of the Artists**

Creativity is one of the characteristic features of a living language. According to Kolawole (2003) speaker of a language could understand and construct sentences which have never been heard or uttered before. Authors of novels, playwrights, poets and singers introduce new words into languages through their creativity. In Yoruba language, new proverbs, idioms, tongue twisters and slangs find their ways into the language through the creativity displayed by the artists.

*Some contemporary proverbs*

Proverbs are witty sayings of elders that are used to convey thoughtful message(s) in few words. Artists display creativity by introducing new words or clause into such proverbs. A few examples will be given

- (a) Èlúlùú tó ń fa òjò, orí ara rẹ̀ nì yóò fí rù ú – àtijó  
(Èlúlùú (a brown-feathered bird believed to be causing rainfall  
that causes rain to fall shall bring it upon its head) – old version)

- (b) Èlúlùú tó ñ fajò bàbá rẹ kò kú kú kọlé pàànú sóko - igbàlódé  
(The èlúlùú bird that causes rain to fall, the father does not build a house of roofing sheets in the farm) – contemporary usage

In the contemporary version, personification is introduced ‘the father’ who does not build a house in the farm or forest. This implies that the ‘rainmaker’ would have itself beaten by the rain.

- (a) Afopina tí yóò pa fitílà, ara rẹ ni yóò pa – àtíjọ  
(A moth that attempts to put-out/quench the naked lamp, will end up killing itself) – old version
- (b) Afopina tí yóò paná súyà ni, ẹran fí yóò fí pọ lórí igbá ni - igbàlódé  
(A moth that attempts to quench the roasting suya-meat furnace will end up adding to the meat for sale) – contemporary

In the old version, the moth attempts to put out the naked lamp while in the contemporary version, it is the roasting furnace or fire. Humour is also introduced in the new with the expression that the moth will end up as meat (**súyà**) for sale. All these types of innovations are indicative of the fact that language is not static. It is dynamic, it grows.

### Modern Idioms

An idiom is a vocabulary item and expression whose meaning is not obvious from the meaning of the individual elements or constituents words in them. Ogunsiji (2000) sees idiom as “a special collocation: the meaning of which cannot be known through the meaning of the separate words that make it up” (p. 56).

It can therefore be said that idioms have two or more meanings. It must have an ordinary meaning and then the deeper or connotative meaning. To identify the connotative meaning, knowledge or familiarity with the culture of the speakers is essential. Some examples of modern idioms are given here. Idioms in Yoruba are called “àkànlò èdè”.

|        | Idioms (Àkànlò Èdè)                      | Meaning (Itumo)                                                                        |
|--------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. (a) | Ó lẹmọri<br>(It has cover)               | O dára, ó pé pérépéré<br>(It is good, complete and perfect)                            |
| (b)    | Só o dá a mọ ?<br>(Can you identify it?) | Se ọrọ, náa ye ọ? Ẹ se o mọ nipa rẹ?<br>(Do you understand what we are talking about?) |
| (c)    | Fún wọn tan<br>(Give them all)           | Ẹyí yóò dára tàbí wu gbogbo eniyan<br>(This will be admired by all)                    |

### Creativity through Tongue-twisters

Tongue twisters could be described as a play on sounds in which syllabus of words are subjected to diverse tonal changes for the purpose of producing different meanings. Among the Yoruba people, it is one of the learning experiences exposed to young ones under traditional educational system to teach them speaking skill. According to Okpewho (1992),

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In tongue-twisters, the idea is to see who can rattle off the words with the greatest speed and accuracy (p. 250).

Such a person is usually praised and he or she would be regarded as a proficient speaker of the language.

Here is an example of tongue-twister coined by this writer:

- (i). Bádágìrì ní bàba Dàda tí rògìrì Badà  
(It was in Badagry that Dada's father bought melon flavour of Badà)
- (ii). Òkòkò lamùkòkò tí ñ kó kòkó Amùkòkò wa s'Oníkókò  
(It is from Okoko that the pipe-smoker brings cocoa of Amùkòkò to Oníkókò)
- (iii). Èran ọlọràá l'Alirá ará Iloràá rà nílẹ̀ ará Aílára  
(It is fat-meat that Alira of Iloraa bought from the man from Aílára)

There is no doubt that it takes great concentration on the part of a Yoruba language speaker – young or old to rattle off those sentences with great speed without error.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The study has several implications to the teaching and learning of Yoruba and other languages. Since language is dynamic, carrying the unique features of a people's tradition and culture, the teacher is expected to keep abreast of developments in his language of specialization.

Attendance at seminars and workshops is a necessity for the language teacher. This will bring to his awareness relevant materials which have been developed by experts and he can use these to enrich the knowledge of his students.

The language teacher should also realise that when languages come in contact, apart from having borrowed words from one language to the other, interference through negative transfer of the knowledge of one language into the other might occur in the utterance of speakers of such languages, it takes a well-equipped teacher to employ relevant methods and strategies to help learners overcome such problems.

Curriculum designers should take advantage of the inherent potentials of those aspects of language and literature like proverbs, idiomatic expressions and tongue-twisters in preparing writing materials for various categories of learners. Textual materials can be designed to incorporate these aspects of Yoruba language for classroom teaching. For instance, learners can be asked to make a collection of proverbs on various subject-matters, tongue-twisters, modern idioms for classroom discussion and practice.

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## **29. A Contrastive Study of Aspects of the Semantics of some English and Yoruba Lexical Items**

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The concept of meaning is a complex one in language study. It is full of different fuzzy edges and it becomes more complex when cultural features are added. This is mandatory because language and culture are inseparable; they go and develop together and this makes meaning a difficult phenomenon to deal with. When two languages come into contact, the tendency is that one language is viewed in the system of other, there is therefore the need to make a linguistic comparative study of languages whenever two or more languages are used in the same environment. In this paper, a semantic contrastive study is made between English and Yoruba. The semantic study is limited to the areas of kinship terms, colour and season. In the study of the three important terms, contrastive statements are made, problem areas and hierarchies of difficulties are highlighted with a view to bringing out areas of differences and possibly similarities in the two languages. This will ultimately widen our understanding of contrastive study in the two languages as far as the semantic areas highlighted in this paper are concerned. The study will also serve as a guide in further contrastive studies in some other areas of language.

### **Introduction**

When two languages are in contact, there is always the tendency to view the second language in the system of the first. This is because all languages can be studied comparatively in the sense that any statement made about a particular phenomenon of language will usually imply a generalization from several phenomena. The concept of transfer is a basic factor when languages are compared or contrasted. This issue of transfer is not found in language study only; if for instance, knowledge is acquired, there is every tendency that it will definitely influence after other knowledge or habit to be acquired later.

Contrastive analysis as a discipline has series of links with another discipline. The knowledge of one task will definitely help another. Contrastive linguistics is therefore dependent on the languages being compared. So the concept of interference, bilingualism and biculturalism are inherent in the discipline. According to Weinreich (1953:11),

When one considers... that the bilingual speaker is the ultimate locus of language contact, it is clear that even socio-cultural factors regulate interference.



As a result of interference phenomenon, switching normally takes place between languages that have come into contact. Because of this link, Lado (1957) asserts that a comparative description of the similarities and differences of any pair of language was the best basis for teaching and learning of either language. He further observes that:

The student who comes into contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those that are similar to his native language will be simple for him and those elements that are different will be difficult. (p. 2)

Based on these premises, this paper will touch on the contrastive analysis of language at the level of semantics. The analysis will focus on three important terms that have viable semantic impulse.

### **Aspects of the Semantic Study of English and Yoruba**

A good number of scholars have dealt extensively with language and its natural link with culture. In any society, the use of language is an integral part of the culture of that society (Maiyanga 1987, Oyetoro 1988, Olanipekun 1987). The works of Hayakawa (1949), Weinreich (1974), Di Pietro (1971) and James (1980) have been of tremendous help in the study of language in contact. From these studies, one can infer that lexical distinction drawn by each language will tend to reflect the culturally important features of objects, concepts, institution and activities (Chomsky 2000). Among the Yoruba people therefore, the integration of language and the cultural elements is paramount.

Yoruba belongs to the subgroup of Kwa language which is under the Niger-Congo language family (Greenberg 1963). Other languages within this subgroup include Edo, Igbo and Itsekiri. Yoruba is a highly tonal language which uses lexically significant but relative contrastive pitch on each syllable. There is therefore lexical borrowing, systematization and interference. The contrastive study of languages (at this level, Yoruba and English) will be helpful because the comparison will highlight differences between both languages and the utilitarian value of comparing the methods and results of language teaching. To this extent, the semantic import of kinship, colour and season is contrastively examined in Yoruba and English.

### **A. Kinship Terms**

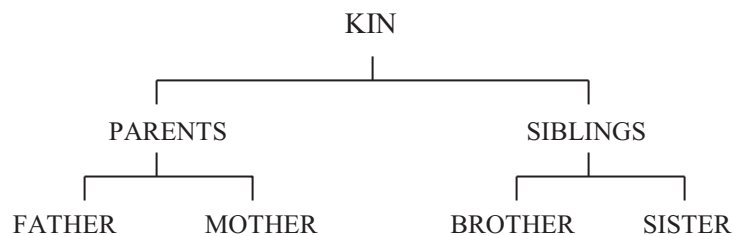
According to Di Pietro (1971), the semantic feature here is normally presented in its socio-cultural matrix and there are some ways in which language may build lexicon.

Kinship terms have to do with blood relationship that is usually brought about by marriage. Kinship term, to Benveniste (1973), is a very cogent factor among cultures especially in Africa. The meanings given to the terms are however different across cultures. In most languages, kinship is patriarchal

whereas the opposite is the case in another. Among the Yoruba people, kinship is patriarchal and this is reflected in the language and culture of the Yorubas.

### **The English Kinship Terms**

The English cultures hold kinship terms in a different way with Yoruba. This is because, the English people are used to nuclear family system and they are very distinct in their kinship terms. They are therefore limited to the biological meanings of kinship terms like father, mother, sister, son, daughter, brother and so on. Others are terms like brother-in-law, sister-in-law, mother-in-law, father-in-law, step-father, step-mother, half-brother, half-sister, uncle, cousin, aunt, nephew, niece. The immediate constituent is therefore the nuclear nature of the kinship and all of them are biologically related. Thus, if an English child refers to the ideas of parent, he means +ADULT, +MALE/FEMALE, +HUMAN, +FATHER/MOTHER, +BLOOD RELATION. In the area of siblings, being the siblings of the husband is identified as that of the wife as well. The following graphic illustration explains what we mean by English by English kinship.



The above tree encapsulates what an English person will refer to as kin.

### **Yoruba Kinship Terms**

Unlike that of English, the categories of kin among the Yoruba, when fully designed, is not limited to nuclear family and blood relation alone. It includes other collateral kinsfolk and even non-kins. Relationships are not limited to immediate siblings. It includes a collection of inter-personal relationships in which one is involved.

Among the Yoruba people, a single kinship term can cover a wider area of meaning. There is semantic extension and more stress is laid on social than the physiological aspects of kinship terms. Among the Yoruba, we have terms like “father” “mother”, “brother” and “sister”. The terms “father” (baba), “mother” (Iya) do not mean real mother or father with blood relation alone. The same thing goes with “brother” and “sister”. One’s brother or sister’s children are his own children too. One’s brother’s wife is also referred to as one’s wife. Terms like uncle, cousin, aunt and so on are not in the Yoruba worldview. They are all referred to as brothers and sisters or in-law. The concept of seniority is shown also when a Yoruba person refers to kin. We can therefore have “elder brother”, “younger brother”, “elder sister”, or “younger sister”. Even in situation where there is no blood relationship, the brother and sister terms are used as a point of

reference. So, the terms have a wider coverage and the same things imply to terms like “father” and “mother”.

### **Contrastive Statements**

According to our analysis, English operates the nuclear family system and different terms are used to qualify the relationships. Yoruba operates the extended family structure and there are few physiological terminologies used to refer to such relationship. A word like “omo” is used to refer to children without any gender differentiation. Such a word is usually duplicated e.g. omo-omo (grandchildren), baba-baba (grandfather), Iya-iya (grandmother). Such duplications are not used in English. In the use of the Yoruba language, “ebi” is used to refer to family generally. This word includes all the kinship terms and all the lexical items that might be used to qualify the extended relationship in the Yoruba cosmogony.

With these, a Yoruba person is likely to have some problems when some English kinship terms like cousin, uncle, nephew, niece, aunt, step-mother and so on are used. In the second language context, there is also the use of terms like first or second cousin. All these, when contrasted with Yoruba, are very likely to cause problems in usage.

### **B. Colour Terms**

The specification of colour differs greatly among cultures. The natural division of colour spectrum therefore differs from one language to the other and different languages have different words for colour. Such can be used to find out areas of differences and similarities.

According to Berlin and Kay (1971), there are eleven basic colour differentiations for human beings and these are white, black, red, yellow, blue, brown, pink, orange, purple and grey. No matter the terms used for colour differentiation, there are two principal colours which are present in all languages. McNeil (1972) identifies these as black and white. In all languages, colour is very well structured and Lyons (1968:58) observes that:

The substance of the vocabulary of colour may therefore be thought of as a physical continuum within which different languages may draw either the same or a different number of boundaries...

The English and Yoruba languages have their differences as far as colour is concerned.

### **English Colour Terms**

English has eight basic colour terms and these are white, black, green, red, yellow, orange, blue and violet. Apart from these there are still peripheral ones like beige, bronze, charthouse, crimson, goal, ivory, khaki, magnetta, mustard, olive, pink, rust, scarlet, tan and turquoise (Fillmore and Rapoport 1971:43). We can see that English has a very wide range of colour terms.

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**Yoruba Colour Terms**

The major colour terms in the Yoruba language are dudu, funfun and pupa (black, white and red). Other colours found in the language are lexicalised into the system Yoruba linguistic system through borrowing. So we can have borrowed items like buluu (blue), yelo (yellow) awo orombo (orange), ofeefee (violet).

**Contrastive Statements**

Yoruba views colour in terms of whiteness, redness and blackness or darkness. If English has eight colour terms, it means, Yoruba is deficient of five. There is therefore the encapsulation of items i.e. the three basic colour terms found in the Yoruba language encapsulates the basic and the peripheral ones in English. Examples are the following:

- Funfun (white) can be used to mean English colours like white, grey, cream, brownish or silver colours.
- Dudu (black) encapsulates purple, black, tan
- Pupa (red) captures red, brown, scarlet, rust, crimson, orange.

**Predictions and Problems**

These colours that are lacking in Yoruba will definitely constitute problems for the Yoruba users of the language. The peripheral colours terms that are lacking in Yoruba will not be easily locatable in the lexicon of Yoruba users of English as a second language. It will be difficult to use the three terms found in Yoruba to encapsulate all other colour terms. Confusion will automatically crop in because it will be wrong to use “white” or “red” to refer to objects or things that are not exactly white or red. The same thing for “black”

**C. Season**

The idea of season emanates from scientific probing and when the season changes, there are also changes in the weather conditions. The Yoruba and English languages have their concepts of season too.

**English Seasons**

Among the English people, the following seasons are present:

- (a) Winter: a cold weather when most of the trees have lost their leaves. It is between November/December and February.
- (b) Spring: This is when the vegetation begins and when leaves and flowers appear. It is around the middle of March to the middle of June.
- (c) Summer-It is the warmest season of the year and again, there are many flowers. It falls around May/June to August.
- (d) Autumn- This is around September, October and November when leaves turn grey and fruits start to ripe.

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All these are in the temperate region in the northern hemisphere.

### **Yoruba Seasons**

The Yoruba people are in the tropical region and the major season found in the Yoruba language system are “Igba ojo” (Rainy season) between March/April to October/November and “Igba eerun” (Dry season) between November and March. It is during the dry season that we have harmattan. Again, there are still some terms normally given some periods in both seasons. During the rainy season, we have “Igba owo” when there are constant but not heavy rain. We also have “Igba iri” when before the day dawns, there will be traces of dews on the roofs and in the bush. These notwithstanding, the two main seasons are the Dry and Rainy seasons.

### **Contrastive Statements:**

Using the Yoruba geographical knowledge, the English seasons are collapsed. Summer and autumn will be represented by dry while winter and spring will be represented by rainy season. The dates of the English seasons will confuse the learners of English as the L<sub>2</sub>. The four English seasons are also impossible to be translated into the geography of the Yoruba system.

### **Conclusion**

In the two languages examined here, one is faced with the arduous task of expressing his culture in a new language situation. The belief is that if we are living in homogeneous world, man’s culture, outlook and reaction, to a given situation, would be the same. However, in heterogeneous situation, there has to be contrasts and differences. The differences, as James (1971) quoting Lado (1964) notes, are the chief cause of difficulty in learning a second language. There is therefore the need to have the adequate knowledge and competence in the second language - English. This will help when the mother tongue is using its own resources to contextualise the second language. Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings of their native languages and cultures to the foreign language and culture. This gives problems into the teaching of a foreign language. This also gives rise to sets of varieties of the foreign language in English – which is now our second language functionally. Interference cannot be divorced when languages are in contact and such can be integrated into the system of the other. Since no language is independent, a contrastive study of this nature will be of help in arriving at the generally accepted system in the variety of English that a second language user will focus. This will also be of help in the teaching and learning of English as a second language.

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### 30. Stylistic Features of Igbo Orature in Ezenwa-Ohaeto's *The Voice of the Night Masquerade*

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This paper posits that the beauty of Ezenwa-Ohaeto's *The Voice of the Night Masquerade* lies in its indebtedness to Igbo folklore, that the anthology draws a lot from the resources of orature. To establish this, the paper highlights some stylistic features of Igbo orature like repetition, lexical matching, structural parallelism, taboo words, rhetorical questions, ambivalence and proverbs and examines the extent to which they are used in *The Voice of the Night Masquerade*. It then calls on Nigerian and indeed African writers to employ the resources in our oral traditions in developing our literatures for this will improve access to their works and enrich the aesthetic experience of the readers most of whom share the same or similar cultures.

#### **Introduction**

The motivation for this paper comes from two factors. The first is Lindfors' (2002) analysis of the characteristic stylistic differences of Igbo and Yoruba prose styles in English. He observes that most critics of African literature base their criticisms on assumptions about the author's race, nationality or individuality. According to him,

African literature has grown so huge in recent years that it now invites new critical approaches based on new sets of assumptions. The critic who finds a new means of entry into the literature may make better progress toward a deepened understanding of what he reads than did many of his predecessors. (p. 154)

He then suggests that critics examine African literature from an ethnic point of view, noting the similarities and differences in the content, structure and style of works by writers from various African ethnic groups. His assumption is that a person's first language usually influences how he expresses himself in a second.

The second motivation comes from the title of our primary text, *The Voice of the Night Masquerade*. The masquerade is a 'representation of deities or divinities' (Anigala, 2005:34). Anigala goes ahead to quote Nzekwu (1960) as observing that 'ancestral spirits are superior to mere mortals, and constitute an unusual phenomenon when they assume physical forms'. In his proword to our primary text, Ezenwa-Ohaeto says that

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It is a cultural tradition in my part of the world that when abominations become unbearable; when the truth must be told with great courage, the night masquerade appears... When the night masquerade speaks, innuendoes collide with insinuations; metaphors battle imagery; parables stumble against proverbs; allusions hit satire, jump over irony, dribble around ridicule to knock against sarcasm while caustic humour often kicks direct statements into the ears of the people. (p. 8).

When an Igbo 'cultural tradition' is rendered in a foreign language as done in our primary text, one wonders how much of the Igbo oral form will be retained to give the poet's persona the aura and credibility he deserves.

Adopting both the ethnic and individualistic approaches to criticism, this paper examines the stylistic features of Igbo oral literature in *The Voice of the Night Masquerade*. The approach is ethnic in that it looks at the orature of the Igbo people, an ethnic group found in the eastern part of Nigeria; and it is individualistic because it examines a single author's style, and not that of many authors from the same tribe (as Lindfors did).

### **Stylistic Features of Igbo Oral Literature**

Achebe (1965) sees African literature as 'a whole generation of new-born infants' where

... one infant looks very much like another; but each is already set on its own journey. Of course, you may group them together on the basis of anything you choose – the colour of their hair, for instance. Or you may group them on the basis of the language they speak or the religion of their fathers. These would all be valid distinctions; but they could not begin to account fully for each individual person carrying, as it were, his own little lodestar of genes.

Here, Achebe recognises the fact that African literature has its universals as well as its particulars, that the different national literatures in Africa share a lot in common in spite of their various distinctive features. And this unity in diversity is well pronounced in orature. Thus the stylistic features of Igbo oral literature discussed here can be found in other ethnic oratures, but we can safely call them Igbo because of the ethnic background of the poet and his persona (the masquerade) in our primary text.

Oral literature thrives in its performance. Thus our discussion here is limited by the medium of data presentation – written instead of oral. This denies the audience the aesthetic and dramatic effect of an extempore presentation. It also denies the audience the artist's occasional digressions and use of histrionics to pass across messages. The symbiotic relationship between the artist and his audience is also not found. However, the essential stylistic features of orature are still present and they give the text its distinctive quality. We are guided in this

discussion of the stylistic features of oral literature in general, and Igbo orature in particular, by the views of scholars like Chukwuma (1976), Kolawole (1993; 2001), Okebalama (2003), Ukaegbu (2003) and Ezejideaku (2003). Stylistic features discussed include repetition, lexical matching, structural parallelism, taboo words, rhetorical questions, ambivalence, proverbs and sobriquet.

### Textual Analysis

Stylistic features highlighted above run through the poems in the anthology. Indeed, each of the thirty poems in the anthology contains a good number of these features. For our analysis, however, we are going to highlight these distinctive features and buttress them with poems selected at random. The italics are mine except where otherwise stated.

### Repetition

Repetition involves saying or writing the same thing more than once. It is a direct carry-over from speech norms and is usually used to establish emphasis. The number of times an item is repeated shows how important it is in that context. Repetition could be of individual lexical items or of larger constructions like phrases and clauses.

An example of direct lexical repetition is seen in 'A Call at Dusk' where the lexical item 'call' is repeated fifteen times to invoke the night masquerade. In fact, the tension is heightened when the persona chants:

The flute *calls* in the distance:

*Call* out the masquerade  
*Call* the fearless spirit;

The drum *calls* in the distance:

*Call* the ancient spirit  
*Call* the past, the present  
*Call* the future,

*Call* the spirit  
It is time to know  
Among the two tortoises  
the one that is a male,

*Call*  
*Call, call*  
*Call* out the masquerade. (p. 14)

This multiple duplication of 'call', instead of boring the reader, portrays the urgency of the situation, the need for the night masquerade to appear and salvage the sour conditions of things. Another instance of direct lexical repetition is seen in the first part of 'The Treasure at Home'. Here, the lexical item 'treasure' is

repeated seven times. In fact, the item is found once in each of the stanzas, apart from the first stanza where it appears twice.

However, the repetition of larger constructions like clauses seems to be more pronounced and this gives the poems the structure of traditional oral songs. Examples can be seen in part I of 'Raising a Chant', which starts thus:

*Raise a chant for me  
 Raise a chant for me  
 can you cast a spell  
 can you cast a spell  
 If you are not a spirit  
 Can you cast a spell?* (p.16)

The imperative 'Raise a chant for me' is further repeated six times in part II of the same poem. This gives the poem rhythm thus making it song-like. It also helps in extending the poem. 'The Treasure at Home' further features this kind of repetition:

*We have travelled far  
 Over the surging seas  
 But it is the treasure at home  
 That will bring us back.*

*It is the treasure at home  
 That made you call at dusk,*

*It is the treasure at home  
 That beckons the masquerade*

*It is the treasure at home  
 that brings the words of the night masquerade.* (p.19)

### **Lexical Matching**

Lexical matching is seen

... where two words are interpretable as being parallel to one another; the relation of meaning between the two words determines the relation of meaning between the two larger sections of text which include those words. (Fabb, 1997:139)

Bamgbose (1982:82) sees it as 'the bringing together of two or more lexical items in such a way as to exhibit a semantic contrast or correspondence' (quoted by Kolawole, 1993). Thus lexical matching can be said to be of two types: one repeats by contrast and the other by synonymy (correspondence).

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An example of lexical matching exhibiting contrast is seen in ‘The Chant Is the Escort’:

We search for the fowl  
 But we asked not *kite*  
 And we asked not hawk (p.38)

Here, though the italicised expressions are not direct contrasts, they differ in meaning precision and form a semantic lexical set. The pictures of the kite and hawk show the level of insincerity and hypocrisy that exists in our society. We search for the right things in the wrong places, else why should we look for the fowl elsewhere without asking her predator? Another example of such lexical matching in the same poem is

I call on the *living*  
 I call on the *dead*  
 I am changing directions (p.39)

Here, the persona wants to chart a course which he wants everybody to follow. So he uses the contrasts ‘living’ and ‘dead’ to refer to the generality of the populace. It should be noted that such lexical contrasts appear not only at the terminal of sentences. Examples abound in the anthology of lexical contrasts appearing medially like

We subdue night  
 We *walk* at night  
 We *work* at night (p.25)

and

masquerades *emerge* from antholes  
 masquerades *depart* from antholes. (p.91)

An example of lexical matching showing synonymy is seen in ‘The Treasure at Home’:

Our treasure is not lost  
 ...  
 There are those  
 who *remember*  
 There are those  
 who *recollect* (p.21)

Here, ‘remember’ and ‘recollect’ are used as synonyms. Other examples can be seen in ‘The Spirit Ties me to This Earth’:



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I *run* only to *return*  
 I *leap* only to *land*  
 I *fly* only to *fall* (p.36)

and

A *restless spirit* ties me  
 The *spirit of revolt* ties me (p.36)

The poet uses this style to emphasise his points and yet not bore his audience.

### Structural Parallelism

Structural parallelism involves similarity of structure. It is a rhetorical device in which a structural pattern is repeated. According to Kane (2003:170), it occurs when 'two or more words or constructions stand in an identical grammatical relationship to the same thing'. Kane emphasises that 'parallel constructions are subject to a strict rule of style: *they must be in the same grammatical form*' (emphasis his). However, Bamgbose (1982:90) recognises the overlap between lexical matching and structural parallelism when he says that

Parallelism... involves a juxtaposition of sentences with a similar structure, a matching of at least two lexical items in each structure, a comparison between the juxtaposed sentences on a central idea expressed through complementary statements in the sentences. (quoted by Kolawole, 1993)

Thus, structural parallelism in some instances involves some level of lexical matching. An example of parallel structures in our primary text is this from 'Before God Goes to Bed':

*Yesterday enemies* were made  
 Water and oil must *separate*  
*Today friends* are rebaptised  
 Salt and pepper must *unite* (p.23)

Apart from the similarities in structure, one can also see the subtle matching of 'yesterday' and 'today', 'enemies' and 'friends', and 'separate' and 'unite', as antonyms. This other example of parallel structures is taken from 'The Living and the Dead':

A birth is death awaited  
 A death is birth anticipated (p.41)

Both clauses here have the same pattern, SVC, with each clause ending with a post-posed participle. Yet another example is seen in 'Dancing for Tomorrow's Dawn':

After the rain  
 The flood clears the debris  
 the debris flows into the stream  
 the stream struggles to the river  
 the river runs into the sea  
 the sea scrambles to the ocean  
 into the depth the debris is dumped (p.82)

Here, apart from lines 1 and 7 which are prepositional phrases and line 2 which has the SVO structure, all the clauses have the SVA pattern. All the subjects are pre-modified by the definite article 'the', the verbs are all in the simple present and the A elements are all prepositional phrases. One other parallel seen here is that the prepositional complement of a preceding clause is the subject of the succeeding clause.

The use of these parallel structures and, indeed, the lexical matchings, apart from extending the songs, should be seen as a method of oral learning and retention of data. It enriches meaning by emphasising or revealing subtle connections between words. It makes the poems impressive and pleasing to hear, gives them rhythm and order.

### **Taboo Words**

Taboo is the 'prohibition or avoidance in any society of behaviour believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment, or shame' (Wardhaugh, 1998:234). Thus, Wardhaugh continues, 'so far as language is concerned, certain things are not to be said or certain objects can be referred to only in certain circumstance, for example, only by certain people, or through deliberate circumlocutions, i.e., euphemistically'. Tabooed subjects include sex, death, excretion, bodily functions, religious matters, and politics; though sex is the most jarring of these. However, the circumstances that call for the night masquerade's appearance do not call for euphemistic use of language: the masquerade says it the way it is if that will make the situation better. In 'On the Street at Night', the masquerade cannot afford to paint pleasant pictures. The poem passionately describes the sorry plight of most Nigerian youths and graduates who roam the streets jobless, hopeless and vulnerable to all sorts of danger:

They went through universities  
 angling for dregs of average joys  
*dripping soggy with sampled sex* (p.27)

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The fourteenth verse of the poem says

At sunset the girls tumble out  
 Waiting to snatch before sunrise  
 dreams an shifting sands  
*Copulating with dollars and sterling*  
 Catching sunrise on high-rise apartments  
 Sometimes dragged away howling  
*Waving undressed wind-washed genitals* (p.28)

The image of girls who are supposed to be responsible and to contribute towards the development of their society, marching out gingerly (tumbling out) to sleep around with men who will give them money (dollars and sterlings) jars the readers' imagination on the extent to which poverty and the quest for money have cost many people their morals. It is also a clarion call for well-meaning Nigerians to proffer solutions to this threat to the future generation.

Taboo words are also used in 'Dancing for Tomorrow's Dawn', though mildly. Part I of the poem starts thus:

It is time to excrete  
 the anus must be open. (p.80)

The expression also appears in two other places in the same poem, emphasising the need for the truth to be told the way it is.

### Rhetorical Questions

A rhetorical question, as Trail (2004:164) puts it,

... is one the speaker (or writer) assumes will only be answered in one way, and is hence not a "question" at all, but an invocation of a kind of choral response which she hopes will establish a bond between her and the audience.

Omole (1998) remarks that rhetorical questions tend to occur frequently in situations of anger, disappointment or frustration. In our primary text, rhetorical questions are used to show the poet's confusion and desperate search for solutions to the problems bedevilling the nation. They are also used to awaken the conscience of the reader to the problems in the society. Part II of 'The Treasure at Home' is inundated with rhetorical questions like

But where is this treasure  
 Hidden under which hearth?

Where is the treasure at home

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Secreted in which eaves? (p.19)

But where is the treasure  
How did the treasure get lost?

How did we forget the location  
I ransack even the shrine  
Where is the treasure at home? (p.20)

The poem laments the way Nigerians overlook their latent resources, both human and natural, in search of greener pastures abroad instead of developing the resources at home. The poet then uses these questions to awaken the readers' consciousness to the fact that these 'treasures' are gradually being lost and if no step is taken, will never be regained. In part IV of the same poem, the poet continues:

We cannot covet treasures elsewhere  
When there is the treasure at home,

I now have a question  
Where are the ears?

...

I ask  
Where are the ears  
Are they for adornments?

To emphasise that his clarion call is in the right direction and glaring for all to see, the poet ends the poem with the question

Must you strike a match  
To see the face of truth? (p.22)

### **Ambivalence**

Onwueme and Emenanjo (1996) identify ambivalence or dualism as a central motif in Igbo philosophical thought. Here, the speaker seems to be making contradictory statements about something. Examples from our text include these from 'Before God Goes to Bed'

Can a man cut a walking stick  
Taller than his height  
Will the Iroko tree not bow  
To the teeth of insistent axes (p.23)

To escape the claws of the hawk  
The fowl went to the diviner,

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To capture the fowl for a meal  
the hawk went to the diviner (p.24)

Also consider this from 'Dancing for Tomorrow's Dawn'

It is time to excrete  
the anus must be open (p.80)

For when one exposes one's anus  
People may pour hot water into it (p.81)

Here, the poet affirms that the land must expose some otherwise secret activities for it to be truly purified of its ills; however, when a people expose their weakness, strangers might make worse the situation.

Dualism might be found everywhere, but it is more emphasised in Igbo thinking than in most other African ethnic groups. The Igbo use these seemingly conflicting positions to emphasise certain points. As an Igbo proverb puts it, 'words are like rags; they go wherever one drags them to.'

### Proverbs

Achebe (1958:5) observes that 'among the Ibo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten'. This stresses the place of proverbs in the Igbo society. They reveal the native wisdom of the past generations and are used to reiterate major themes, to sharpen characterisation, to clarify conflict and to focus on the values of the society (Lindfors, 2002:92). However though they have the quality of immutability, proverbs are usually modified when used in verse to suit the demands of rhythm and beat. This adaptation, in the words of Chukwuma (1976) 'may take the form of adding a few words or of contrasting the proverb words while still retaining the essential image necessary for its identification. For instance, the Igbo proverb, *'asokata eze anya ekpuru nkata n'isi gwa ya okwu'* (after respecting a king for a long time, one wears a basket and talks to him; in other words, one disguises oneself and talks to the king without incurring his wrath) is rendered thus in 'Raising a Chant II':

A crown is a crown  
If a king rules recklessly  
A torn basket adorns our heads  
Then a curse is raised  
For a crown is a crown  
Even crowns of torn baskets. (p.18)

The proverb, *'nti na-anu ihe di n'ime; nke di na mputa bu mma ka e ji ya acho'* (the ear that hears is inside; the outer one is for adornment) is presented rhetorically, thus

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I ask  
Where are the ears  
Are they for adornment? (p.22)

to emphasise that the masses have been turning deaf ears to their responsibilities. Yet other examples of adapted proverbs are these rhetorical questions:

Can a man cut a walking stick  
Taller than his height  
Will the Iroko tree not bow  
To the teeth of insistent axes  
Do we not eat with the eyes  
before we eat with the mouth? (p.23)

These proverbs are rendered in the original Igbo forms as statements, but the poet transforms them to rhetorical questions to forcefully awaken the consciousness of his audience to his confusion at the worrisome state of affairs in his community and to maintain the rhythm and beat of the poem. All of these notwithstanding, the poet renders some of the proverbs in their original forms.

A year with an abomination  
It earns reputation of a custom (p.59)

(*Alu gbaa aro*  
*O bulu omenala*)  
An old woman is not old  
To the dance steps she know (p.63)

(*Agadi nwanyi adighi aka nka*  
*N'egwu o ma-agba*)

Remember a warrior that faces a battle  
At the same time engages in wresting  
Even a child will defeat him. (p.63)

(*Anyia di dike n'ogu*  
*Di ya na mgba*  
*Obele nwa emerie ya*)

These proverbs further reveal the morals and values of the Igbo society.

### **Sobriquet**

A sobriquet is an informal name or title given to somebody or something, more or less a nickname. Kolawole (1993) adds that it is



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mostly based on the outstanding qualities of the said subject which tend to make the addressee blow his achievements out of proportion. Sobriquets are the result of lexico-semantic deviation resulting in nominal. Such nominals are either active or qualitative nouns.

Examples abound in the text especially in praise of the poet-persona (invariably the night masquerade).

I am the tree  
                   I cannot be climbed,  
 I am the earth  
                   I cannot be carried (p.16)

I am the voice  
                   they avoid at night,  
 I am the glowing log  
                   covered with ashes (p.38)

I am the raffia straw that talks  
 I am the spirit that talks,  
 I am the leopard that kills and devours,  
 I am the fearful two-headed snake,  
 I am knower of things done in secret,  
 I am mud without water  
 Waiting in combat for the unwary,

I am something that is dead  
 and yet talks,

I am that which falls on the ground  
 and burgeons,

I am knife used to kill a lion,  
 I am rope used to pull an elephant (p.92)

However, some sobriquets are used in praise of other characters like these in praise of Ken Saro-Wiwa:

Some will remember you  
 As the full stop  
 to the sentence of disaster,  
 Or as the bone  
 In the bone of contention,  
 Or as the bitter sting

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In the tail of he scorpion,  
Or as the water  
that has flown under the bridge. (p.48)

Kolawole (ibid) further observes that sobriquets occur more frequently in invocatory chants than in other poetic forms apparently because invocatory chants are out to praise if not to flatter.

### Conclusion

The preceding sections of this paper have demonstrated that the aesthetics of *The Voice of the Night Masquerade* lies in its indebtedness to orature. The anthology is inebriated in oral tradition, which explains why the poet persona does not speak in plain language, but in language couched figuratively and with profound musical quality. The poet approximates his persona's language to that of a real-life masquerade to achieve credibility. And he chooses the masquerade persona because of the gravity and urgency of the message he intends passing across to his audience. He focuses on issues ranging from bad leadership, corruption, prostitution, unemployment to eulogies for deserving persons.

Another point of note here is that the poet chooses English as his medium apparently to cover a wide range of readership. Though steeped in Igbo orature, the anthology is meant for the general Nigerian and, indeed, African audience. In spite of their linguistic differences, African ethnic groups all have the same reverence for the masquerade, especially the night one.

This paper then calls on Nigerian writers to employ the resources in our oral tradition in developing our literatures. Apart from literary works written in Nigerian languages, written Nigerian literature does not seem to have a direct link to the nature and provenance of oral literature. In fact, Sekon (1988) asserts that

Such cases of intense relationship between oral tradition and written literatures as we find occasionally in Soyinka and Achebe are too few and far between for anybody to describe the role of oral literature in contemporary Nigerian literature as consistent and seminal.

In discussing the value of this recourse to oral tradition, Sekoni further states that

when writers have borrowed devices and motifs from oral tradition, they have, in many cases succeeded not only in improving access to their works but also in enriching the aesthetic experience of readers who share the same culture with them.

Achebe (1965) recognises this value of oral tradition in written Nigerian literature when he says that 'the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience, but it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings.' Ezenwa-

Ohaeto not only demonstrates this in *The Voice of the Night Masquerade* but also asserts it through the persona when his persona says in 'The Treasure at Home' that

The treasures at home  
should not first be forgotten

We cannot covet treasures elsewhere  
When there is the treasure at home. (p.22)

The beauty of our literature lies in the treasure at home – our oral tradition.

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## 31. The Treasures of Ibiwari Ikiriko's *Oily Tears of the Delta*

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Ibiwari Ikiriko's *Oily Tears of the Delta* is a Collection of poems that articulates and addresses the injustices suffered by people of the Niger Delta. Much as it is protest poetry, the work also has significant artistic merits as well as serves as a historical document. It is on these three pivots that this paper appraises the work as a delightful contribution to modern Nigerian and African literature.

### **About the author: Ibiwari Ikiriko**

Ibiwari Ikiriko (1954 – 2002) was born in Kano, but grew up in his home town of Okrika, Rivers State. This afforded him the opportunity to know the riverine terrain as the back of his hand. He obtained a B.A. in English and Education from the University of Ife, an M.A. in English and Literary Studies from the University of Calabar, and a Ph.D. in Art and Commitment in Poetic Creation from the University of Port Harcourt.

He lectured in various Institutions, and he was an ardent member of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), rising to be General Secretary of the Rivers State branch just before his death.

The plight of the Rivers man was a great burden that he bore daily; cryptic puns that were spurting outlets for the heart were never lacking on his door. In fact, he was in his element when he showed round participants at the National ANA Conference which held in Port Harcourt in the year of his death; Ikiriko painstakingly took them to sites of human misery and degradation to see for themselves what he had always moaned about.

Fortunately, his heartbeat was centrally put together in this Collection, published a few years before his death.

Ikiriko's *Oily Tears of the Delta* is an impressive work that pungently harnesses the silent groans of the Niger Deltans, expressing it in beautiful poetry. It has, in Pope's words, projected "what the people oft thought but ne'er so well expressed". The foregoing automatically implicates the work as protest poetry, which it unequivocally is. Other poetic attempts to encapsulate the agonies of Niger Delta dwellers include: Jason Osai's *Scars Graffiti* and Tanure Ojaide's *Delta Blues and Home Songs*.

Of all these, however, there is a certain finesse, a control and crafted simplicity that makes *Oily Tears* so appealing. In this paper, it is my intention to examine this literary work as (a) art (b) protest literature, and (c) as a socio-historical document. This is because the treasures, relevance and significance of the work are hinged on these three qualities.

### **As a Work of Art**

*Oily Tears* is indisputably a fine work of art whose elegance and beauty lie in its simplicity. The fluidity of its simple but studded diction is its greatest asset, for according to Aristotle (1982:62), "The greatest virtue of diction is to be clear without being commonplace". There is no pretension or unnecessary obscurantism



(to borrow a term from Chinweizu et al.) that belabours the reader or takes its toll on his comprehension. This simple diction, nevertheless, is illuminated with sparkling gems of poetic devices, some of which will be examined closely below.

The first poem, “Evening Already” is written in four parts and serves as introit to the entire Collection. Its paradox is couched in the title’s oblique reference to Chinua Achebe’s *Morning Yet on Creation Day*. Yet this allusion is explicit only in the last line of the poem. The paradox is that as a beginning, it is already the end (evening), and this is worked out in the poem’s structure – it is both the introduction and summary of the book’s theme. The poet is unswerving in focus and uncompromising in the tight thematic unity of the Collection. What is the theme, one might ask? It is none other than the agonising frustration of the Delta man, which ought to have exploded into emancipatory action long ago but is still inexplicably inept, though much is the yearning for action. The thematic unity is such that nearly all the poems harp on this theme. The only one that strikes the wrong chord in the Collection is “Taxi driver”, for even “A government ago” simply takes the concern over our inaction/ineptitude to the national level.

The ineptitude decried in the opening poem is such that he finally turns to mythical lore in a sustained invocation (Parts iii and iv) for the power to explode into action. This is artistically turned into epic invocation in Stanzas 4 – 7 of Part iii – if he cannot fight yet, let him at least sing of the stoic, epic suffering and endurance of his people, which will hopefully attract global attention and concern. He intones:

Sound, O sound for me  
Detonate me, let me explode  
Excite me, let me disperse.

Beat me, play me  
Make me a Spirit Drum  
And let me sound.

Let me sound  
And tell the story  
Of the times.

The lines of the first two stanzas above are reminiscent of the opening lines of both Virgil’s *Aeneid* and Okigbo’s “Elegy of the Wind”. Those of the third stanza echo Horatio’s words at the end of Shakespeare’s great tragedy, *Hamlet*.

The paradox that pervades Ikiriko’s artistic design in the work stems perhaps from the paradox of the Delta man’s existence; it is a household axiom in his milieu that he suffers in the midst of plenty. Thus *Oily Tears* is imbued with startling paradoxes, a few of which will serve as illustrations here.

Let me tell  
Of the dog that eats dung  
And sports shining  
White teeth

---

Is man's closest companion,  
More intimate even  
Than his closest quadruped relations.

And of the  
Goat that shuns shit  
And hoards dirty  
Grey teeth

Is man's most  
Badly ridiculed beast  
Good only for good and commerce

("Evening Already" Part iii Stanzas 8–11).

Interestingly, many of the paradoxes are intrinsically coined into puns, as exemplified below:

When I recall  
"The Dead God  
Of African literature"  
In *Transition*

I mourn the more  
Obi Wali's  
Transition into  
A Dead End

("Transition for Obi Wali")

Puns, as a matter of fact, seem to be Ikiriko's major strength as a poet. The pungency of meaning in his short, epigrammatic lines derives from the dynamism of a skilled yoking of words that may have hitherto been unassociated in the reader's compass. The effect is a pleasant surprise, if not shock, as he (the reader) slowly assimilates the untangled meaning while savouring the fresh tang of the poet's language.

A similar exploitation of puns is evident in Niyi Osundare's *The Eye of the Earth*, but Ikiriko's kind of pun is usually both alliterative, metaphorical as well as onomatopoeic. To illustrate this, a look at some excerpts is necessary:

Massician, so  
The magic music  
Was not to last, after all  
It played to terminate at mid-key?

O! what meaning can I make of this?  
What sense can I sift of it?

---

Moral logic is crooked  
Scriptural sense is flawed

And I am numbed and sieged  
Like eye-balls by glaucoma blinding them

(“Dinma: better dead than blind.”)

First to be observed is the dominance of the bilabial /m/ and sibilant /s/ and /z/ sounds. These sounds can be said to evoke audio and visual images of moaning, mourning and sighing into which the persona and the masses are flung as a result of Dinma’s death. Further on in the poem, Millahba is singled out as a symbol of the entire bereaved. Dinma, of course, is none other the late Denni Dinma Fiberesima, optician and the people’s physician – the first to introduce the Flying Doctors’ Scheme while he was the Health Commissioner. Under the Scheme, his white counterparts were flown into the country, and together they administered free eye treatment to the masses. Millahba was the wife and co-labourer in the arduous task of palliating the sufferings of the Rivers masses. This was the oasis in the desert; the music that enlivened the people’s lives. Thus, in the word, “massician”, the poet combines “optician”, “physician”, “musician” and “masses” simultaneously.

The accompanying sibilant sounds, on their own part, evoke images of singing – suspiration from a dumb-founded people.

Yet the last segment of the poem explodes into the dominance of /k/ sound as the “clan clamours for a concert”. “Cataracts await his skilled touch to clear”. Then the /p/ sound that insinuates “pushing” takes over. The poem ends with:

These papillary promptings  
Must post past the pupal stage.

The implication is that the unfortunate death of Dinma should serve as leverage, not a deterrent, in the struggle to alleviate the sufferings of the Rivers masses. The blue-print he drew was only at the pupal stage of its implementation and must be pushed beyond that by the living.

Further examples of Ikiriko’s metaphoric pun can be seen in the following lines of the poem:

An eye camp is in gyration  
And you the iris fix-locked up  
Dinma, tear – filled,  
Innumerable eyes are  
Turned into rivers with  
Cataracts waiting for  
Your skilled tough to clear.

Indeed the entire poem is coined in the metaphorical language of Dinma’s optical and political vocations.

Another quality of the poems that contributes to their fine artistry is control. The lines are short and cryptic with a terse-like control that borders on impressionistic art. A perfect example of this finesse can be seen in "The Fisherman's net". The poet's tacit control in this poem heightens the tragedy of the situation without degenerating into pathos.

In terms of structure and sound, the poet mostly relies on repetition and sometimes rhymes for rhythm. Although the Collection is largely written in blank verse, a piece like "Ompadec" actually has a regular rhythm and rhyme scheme, being written in couplets. Furthermore, the nursery-like and repetitive rhythm of "Top upon bottom" ironically tries to trivialise the whole issue of the North of Nigeria oppressing the South. The effect is that the near frivolous tone underscores the bitter resentment of the oppressed at the world's nonchalant attitude to its plight.

The height of Ikiriko's structural design in *Oily Tears* is depicted in "July". The poem, which opens with the bathos of a June Promise easily broken as Generals break wind in messes, ends up in a complex graphic display; the words are pictured lying next to one another the way June lies next to July on the calendar, but lies against it in Nigerian politics. The pun is on "lie". The poem is a citric guffaw at the political events that rocked Nigeria between June and July, 1993, being the conduct and nullification of elections in which late Chief M.K.O. Abiola was declared winner. To the poet, it is significant and symbolic that these events occurred in July, which he thus interprets as "June LIE!" – a new name for "July". In other words June lied against July.

### As Protest Poetry

As a scholar of Art and Commitment in Poetic Creation, Ibiwari Ikiriko was passionately devoted to the Niger Delta Cause. In *Oily Tears*, he does not just experiment with art (as shown above) for the sake of it, his commitment is unequivocal. In lamenting the plight of Niger Deltans, he wishes, through art, to draw attention to the unspeakable irony in which a people so endowed find themselves. The lines quoted earlier of "Evening Already" couch the poet's desire to shake his people out of their lassitude by his story. He therefore pointedly articulates the malaise in bullet words like:

- a) Goose-flesh turns my body  
Into that of a plucked hen  
Each time your condition  
Confronts me,  
Minority Man.
- b) Pipe that forever pipe out  
never in (p.15).
- c) I am of  
the Oil Rivers,  
where rivers are  
oily and can  
neither, quench my thirst  
nor anoint my head. (p. 20).

Research by Ifedi and Nwankwo (quoted by Nnanna:28) shows that from 1990 to 2000, the estimated total quantity of oil spilled was 2038711 barrels of which only about 524945 (25.8%) was recovered. The rest was left to pollute the air, water and soil.

- d) “Oloibiri streets  
Would have been tarred  
With gold if ours  
God’s own Country were”.
- e) It is time to be tide-borne  
And shame profit mangers.  
Constricting Boa, the predators  
Have burrowed past the numb segment  
  
And it’s time to constrict, crush,  
And grind insatiate bones and all.
- f) This china pot because you  
cushion it  
like its raffia pad a pitcher,  
Has its babel contents contained.

The above excerpts have been particularly culled because they summarise the whole story. The china pot symbolises the fragile unity of the Nigerian nation, which is largely sustained by interests in oil revenue. Yet the pipes that suck this oil to other parts of the nation never bring anything back, which is evident in the abject poverty that has besieged the majority of the people for long. But it is well-known that Aberdeen, for instance, is called the Granite City of Britain because of the developmental priority accorded it since the stakeholders know that much of Britain’s oil is drilled from Scotland’s North Sea. The last but one quotation is a battle - cry to rouse the sleeping giant; it is a call to remind the aborigines of their military prowess in the past, presuming their erstwhile passivity to be the superior wisdom of the boa and crocodile respectively. It is now TIME to crush the profit – mongers lest “service salaams to slavery”.

### As a Socio-Historical Document

Perhaps the most poignant asset that *Oily Tears* possesses for non-literary minds is that it recaptures, through its vivid imagery, the teeming and varied abundance of sea food enjoyed by the Deltans in the past. The present generation and foreigners in this region literally find it difficult to understand the nostalgic groans of Niger Delta natives; this is true. The reason is that the present scenario cannot equate even a skeleton of yester-years. However, when one reads “Delta Tears”, the climax of the Collection and theme song, it is easier for one to understand the extent to which the people have been robbed. There, the various tribes of sea food, now sparse or extinct, are catalogued. They range from sardines, crayfish, mud-skepers, clams, crabs, periwinkles, oysters to innumerable species of fish.

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Ikiriko writes:

Where are the periwinkles clusters  
That heap higher than the collector's  
Basket,

Staple shore shell and sure  
Companion  
Of each journeying *iba* ball?

O where are the dangling oyster  
Canes  
That bend mangrove boughs

Periwinkle's close cousin, watch-shell  
Shell nature's gauge of tidal levels?

Whither the bounties of the brackish  
zones  
Innumerable like sandflies in moonlit  
nights!

Then the clans and clans and clans  
Of life: shelled, scaly, feathered, furred,  
and leafed.

Nothing, except fagend flora and  
fauna,  
pale plains of sand and mud, burrowed  
And gaunt...

Indeed, after conducting a research on the "History of Fishing in Okiriko Town", Oruebo (1984:70) comments:

It is today argued among fishermen that despite the innovations in fishing methods during the post-colonial period, fish production has dropped very greatly when compared with that of old days.

First, they argue that the pollution is caused by activities of the oil companies operating in Rivers State and has resulted in mass destruction in the rivers.

On his own part, Nebel (1990) has discovered through research that pH levels directly affect aquatic life, especially at the formative level. Acidity in water has tremendous impact on the pH level, and he concludes that failure to reproduce is the major cause of the decline of virtually all aquatic life.



The poem, "Under Pressure" depicts the social reality of tension under which the inhabitants live. High pressure pipes criss-cross the land, with warnings on land and at sea; no fishing, farming, berthing or anchor.

Nwagwu (1987) categorises the environmental side-effects of oil exploration as follows: resource deterioration, which includes soil mineral and forest depletion; biological pollution; physical disruption through gas flaring, acid rain radioactive and chemical poisons; thermal heat; social disruption, evident in congestion and erosion of communal values.

Yet the government ensures that trespassers are "compressed, roasted and melted". The *Tell Magazine* of 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2006 cover title of "The Niger Delta : Obasanjo Bares His Fangs".

The poet goes further to trace the economic history of the people before crude oil was discovered. He recapitulates this in "The palm and the crude". Then oil palm, grown in the verdant soil was the economy's mainstay; the people fared better in that both production, sales and profit were controlled by them and so they benefited maximally. Therefore were they "proud partners" with the "merchants and missions" in "propelling the pacification process". These lines traverse centuries of trade with Portuguese to the period with European missionaries and traders, who midwived the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria.

In "Dappa Biriye on the jubilee", "To Alfred Diete-Spiff" and "Rivers at 25", he captures the historic and magical moments of the State's creation. It was a long, tortuous journey, recorded in the cryptic verses of "Rivers at 25" for posterity. A journey of upheavals and the violence recorded in stanzas of 9, which culminated in a "clatter", not "platter" realization, the realization turned out to be an anti-climax twenty-five years later. In the poem dedicated to Dappa Biriye, Ikiriko venerates the Statesman for the role he played in the struggle though reminding him that they have been short-changed. Talking about short-change it is pertinent to refer to Eteng (1997). He pointed out that over four decades of oil exploration in the Niger Delta has had a disastrous impact on the socio-economic life of the present population.

Moreover, a recent research by Nnanna (2006:64) among the Izombe peasant farmers in Oguta Local Government Area of Imo State reveals is highly revealing. According to her:

The most devastating element land destruction is oil spillage. It kills plants animals and fishes; makes land uncultivable and rivers\streams harmful for household use, causing diseases to people.

She further states that less farm plots are now available to the people as oil companies, through government, have appropriated some of the land while others have been damaged. The people, who are primarily farmers, (primary producers) are thus forced to seek employment in the secondary and tertiary sectors without requisite skills. This results in low wages and cumulative poverty.

To further highlight what Ikiriko means by "short-changed", it is necessary to quote Okaba (2005:126):

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So far compensation rates thus determined by government are grossly inadequate. A mature Cocanut [sic], Obeche, Cocoa and Avocado pear go for N100.00, N600.00, N500.00 and N180.00 respectively. In actual sense there is a wide gap between rates of compensation paid and the actual value of the economic trees damaged. The Obeche tree when processed into planks will generate over N10, 000 (Ten thousand naira).

Such is the economic reality under which the people thrive.

Alfred Diete-Spiff is extolled for the yet-to-be-rivalled feat he accomplished for the State as its first governor. The poet writes:

O what would have been  
 The form of the foundation in it  
 If some other hand had begun  
 The laying on creation day,  
 Perhaps towering as thou are above all  
 Thou saw further than all.

Or perhaps they practised skills as diver  
 Enabled thee dive deeper than the  
 Ocean floors to root this foundation.

“Ogoni Agony” traces the socio-political history of the Ogoni people; an erstwhile obscure community that rose to global recognition; from servility to bloody assertion through the efforts of its visionary son, Ken Saro Wiwa. He was a writer whose serial comedy, “Basi and Company” endeared him to Rivers people and Nigerians at large. With fiery words, he inspired his people into a sustained protest that forced the world to look on its shame. International Human Rights Activists joined in singing the Ogoni song for reprisal. Ikiriko however points pin-points that what frustrated the movement was intra-conflicts among the Ogoni and inter-conflicts with neighbouring ethnic groups of Rivers State, who were “fellow-travellers” and “potential allies”. This is an allusion to the wars the Ogoni respectively fought with Andoni, Eleme and Okrika people in the hey-days of MOSOP. Thus from within and without, enemies arose that conspired with the military regime to arrest and hang Saro Wiwa and other MOSOP leaders. This atrophied the dreams that were close to being fulfilled, especially if other ethnic groups of the State had joined in the struggle.

The poet ends by reminding all Rivers people that none should rejoice at the failure of the Ogoni because it is a collective one. Besides, the present ditch is a mere pause in the struggle.

In conclusion, I wish to re-state that going through Ibiwari Ikiriko's *Oily Tears of Niger Delta* is a very pleasant journey that is worth the while both for literary and non-literary minds. It is indeed a brilliant addition to the body of modern Nigerian and African poetry.

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## **32. An Analysis of Fish Names in Oguta Culture: Implications for the Millennium Development Goals**

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For any indigenous community with an aquatic culture, Fish is more than an entity with nutritional value. It has both sociolinguistic and sociocultural significance. Like personal names, fish names serve as a “mirror of the culture of the people (Essien, 1986:87). They also provide insight into the nature of the language. Reports from the informants who helped in the compilation of the corpus for this study, indicate that while some fish names could not be recovered because the species had migrated “in search of greener pastures”, other names were gradually fading away because the species are now extinct. It is therefore necessary to document fish names as part of the on-going effort to combat the threat on our languages. In this paper, the fish name material presented and analyzed is based on a corpus containing 40 fish names. The fish names were collected by interviewing informants drawn from among individuals who are reputed as vested with the responsibility of being custodians of the Oguta culture. With the use of this corpus, it has been possible to carefully make inferences about the social life of the Oguta people; such as the giving of praise/nicknames, the norms, values and even the love life of the people. The various functions/significance of fish names are analyzed not only in their linguistic but also in their socio-cultural contexts.

### **Introduction**

The general aim of this paper is to analyze the pattern of the fish naming system of the Oguta people of Imo State in the South East Region of Nigeria. The motivation for the study was a discussion on the endangered status of African languages during the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria, at the University of Port Harcourt. After the keynote address delivered by Prof. Munzali Jibril, a participant lamented that the Nigerian language speakers of the older generation are no longer passing the languages to the younger generation. He recounted his experience when he went to the market to buy fish. He asked the fish sellers for “Atuma” and they gave him another species of fish. All efforts to make them see the difference between Atuma and the fish they wanted to sell to him failed. Frustrated, he left the market without Atuma. His story generated a lot of comments from the participants. It was observed that this was a function of the intergenerational gap in matters of language transmission. If nothing is done, a lot of fish names will disappear as the fishes disappear from the waters due to the environmental hazards. Linguists at the conference were therefore called upon to document fish names for the preservation of this precious heritage, which is part of our indigenous knowledge system and also for comparative/ historical studies. This study therefore is a response to that call.

Generally, most research on names is interdisciplinary in nature. This is the case with this particular study. Our approach here is partly sociolinguistic and partly socio-onomastic. Viewed from these perspectives, the purpose is to analyze the socio-linguistic and socio-cultural significance of fish names with emphasis on the Oguta culture. The main questions are:

- (1) What names do Oguta people use to identify the various species of fish in their surrounding waters?
- (2) How do the fish names reflect the life style of the Oguta people?
- (3) What symbolic meanings do fish names have in the Oguta culture and
- (4) What are the linguistic elements that stand out in the way Oguta people name the fishes in their water?

From the questions, it could be observed, that anthropology is linked to this study since apart from analyzing the linguistic elements in fish names, the study delves into such areas as the mystical interpretation associated with fish names and the use of fish names in the everyday lives of the Oguta people (Saarelma-Maunumaa, 2003). These characteristics of fish names are highlighted and analyzed in their sociocultural context. Thus the study involves elements of anthropological linguistics.

### **Background**

The traditional people of Oguta in Imo State, Nigeria, were predominantly farmers and fishermen with a rich aquatic culture. Ofili (1998:199) reports that “while farming has maintained its tempo over the decades, fishing and fish-rearing is declining”. Oguta is renowned for age-old ponds known by their local parlance as ‘*Agbo*’. Some of these ponds are usually empty during the dry season but fill up during the rainy season as a result of the rising water levels of the Urashi River and Ogbuide Lake. As the water levels recede, the ponds trap fishes of various shapes and sizes, which the owner/farmers catch. The procedure is apparently easy. Beside these ponds, fishes flow with fresh water from the lake and Urashi River into various tributaries that do not dry up during the low-season and constitute a veritable source of good harvest for fishermen who engage in fishing.

Nevertheless, returns have been declining over the years. The same bleak outcome is faced by regular fishermen who paddle the nooks and crannies of Ogbuide lake in search of fishes. The fishes it seems, are all gone as a result of the heat and pollution caused the environment by exploration and production activities of the oil companies operating in the area, the dredging of the water fronts by greedy contractors, blockade of creeks, canals and tributaries by oil companies in the course of construction of roads in the areas to enhance their operational efficiency and the construction of some dams in the Niger River, which links up with the lake through the Urashi River. Prior to the 1970s it was possible to catch fish with bare hands while washing at the banks of the lake. Nowadays, even the deepest points of the lake contain only few fishes.



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**Theoretical Framework**

Any good study requires a theoretical frame work upon which it can be anchored. Accordingly, this work borrows elements of onomastic, socio-linguistic and anthropological approaches. As observed by Saarelma-Maunumaa (2003), onomastics has been a neglected branch of linguistic studies of most African countries. Where onomastic studies exist, the main emphasis is on the study of place names. Anthropologist on their own part are known to be interested in personal names with emphasis on name giving and the use of personal names in the society. The anthropological approach however, does not analyze naming systems as linguistic systems or names as linguistic elements.

Naming in African culture has recorded quite an impressive list of studies. Prominent among them are Akinnaso (1980); Amin (1993); Essien (1986 & 2003); Ojoade (1980) and Okere (1996) just to mention but a few. Essien (2004) provides an impressive explorative linguistic analysis of Nigerian names from four ethnic naming systems; namely, Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa and Ibibio. He also highlights the cultural significance of naming in these cultures. Of interest to the present study is his observation that:

Names are of such importance to the Ibibio's that they are part and parcel of their language, not just mere words like.... etc which happen to be tagged to some individuals for identity, but also a reflection of the grammatical structure of the language, in addition to their individuals lexical meaning. Thus, if one were to collect all Ibibio names, one would have collected a significant part of the grammar of the language. It is therefore, possible to learn basic Ibibio through a collection of names (Essien, 2004:113).

From the cultural angle, he opines that culturally, Nigerian names are amazingly significant and can be viewed from two perspectives; that is, what names meant to the people and what they reveal about the culture of the people.

Ubahakwe (1981) categorises names in such a way as to highlight the dynamics of naming among the Igbo people. According to him, Igbo names reflect the family and societal values, sociological imprint and personality dynamics among the Igbos. In line with Ubahakwe's research, the present study focuses on naming system among the Oguta-Igbos with a focus on fish names. This will fill the gap in the study of names and naming systems in Africa since the study of fish names among people with aquatic culture constitutes a neglected topic especially in Africa.

**Conceptual Framework: Language Culture and Fish Names**

Language, culture and fish names are three concepts that are in focus in this paper. It is therefore necessary to briefly highlight the relationship between them and the significance of this relationship for this study.

The relationship between language and culture is also subject of heated debates. While some studies (Tengan, 1994 126) opine that "in theory, the meaning of language and culture as well as the functional relationship that is being established between them will always remain different", others (Langacker,



1994; Downs, 1971 and Haslett, 1989) see them as inextricably intertwined. According to this school of thought, culture operates as a system of symbols and so does language. Man's capacity to symbolize, to make one thing stand for another is what makes a people unique. Thus, with the use of symbols which are part of human language, culture is transmitted from one generation to another. Language and culture overlap so extensively that they have become virtually inseparable, mutually dependent and in most cases simultaneously acquired. According to Kohiheim (1998:173), "a naming or an onymic system is a system because it consist of a set of elements which are bound together by specific structural relationships, thereby forming a boundary which separates the system from its environment". Kohlheim further observes that however, the naming system is connected to its extra-linguistic environment in many ways as names have a variety of secondary socio-culture functions beside its primary function of identification of the entity. These secondary functions may be different in different societies. These observations though made in relation to personal naming systems are germane to the fish naming system of the Oguta people and therefore relevant for this paper.

Fish names like human or place names are products and reflections of the intimate links between language and socio-cultural organization (Herbert, 1998:187). They are cultural artifacts especially among peoples with an aquatic culture. They are not arbitrarily given as Algeo (1973) would argue. Rather, they are carefully patterned and are culture-laden as this study will show.

### **Classification of Fish Names**

Fish can be classified in a variety of ways. For example, one can distinguish between:

- (i) Herbivorous and Carnivorous family (according to their pattern of feeding).
- (ii) Scaly and Non-scaly (smooth-skinned) class (according the skin structure)
- (iii) Bonny and Non-Bonny (according to their skeletal structure)

These classifications form an integral part of the Oguta indigenous knowledge which is quite extensive indeed and is beyond the scope of this paper. For the purpose of this particular study, we are adopting a different classification system.

### **Phonological Properties of Fish Names**

The syllable structure of the fish names in our corpus are in line with those reported in most languages of the Niger Congo Family,

- (i). Fish names with a (V)CV Structure:

|          |         |          |
|----------|---------|----------|
| (1) Aja  | (5) Egu | (9) ɔmi  |
| (2) Asa  | (6) Eti | (10) Ubu |
| (3) Agba | (7) Ifi | (11) Utu |
| (4) Ebi  | (8) ɔfu |          |

Discussions with some of our informants suggest that the initial vowels in the names of the fishes in this group are prefixes, as in:

- 
- (a) o/mi 'Fish that is Slippery'  
It slippery
- (b) I/ fi 'Fish that moves clumsily'  
It clumsy in movement
- (c) A/sa (sha) 'Fish that is beautiful'  
Tns wash
- (ii). Fish names with (V) CVCV structure:

The majority of the fish names in our corpus belong to this class. These are:

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| (12) Abubaramiji | (20) ọdọba       |
| (13) Akata       | (21) ọgbowu      |
| (13) Akunu       | (23) Okwujo      |
| (14) Apupa       | (24) Oriri       |
| (14) Atuma       | (25) Owuwu       |
| (17) Ereyi       | (26) ugana       |
| (18) Ifuru       | (27) ukawu       |
| (19) Ikiriko     | (28) ukporokwuma |

(iii). Fish names with N-CV structure:

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| (29) Nkorọ        | (30) Nchicha      |
| (31) Mgbenako     | (32) Mgbitimamgbi |
| (33) Nkpurunkpuru |                   |

(i) Fish names that combine (V) CV and N-CV in one name

- |                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| (34) Anyancha    | (36) Arantaja |
| (35) Egbenefenku |               |

### Morphology of Fish Names

(i) Fish names involving compounding:

- |                   |                             |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| (37) Akata-igwe   | (38) Akata-ukoro            |
| (39) Anya-ncha    | (40) Mgbe-na-ako (mgbenako) |
| (41) Ubu-na-ifuru | (44) Ushi-asa               |

(ii) Fish names with prefixes

In relation to the fish names in the first and second groups, it has been suggested that for some of them, the initial vowels are prefixes. Examples like: o/wuwu, o/riri, 'a/sa', ukawu are convincing. However, one cannot make a conclusive claim until a thorough study of the etymology of Oguta fish names is conducted.

To crown me (fish for ceremonial purposes).

(iii) Fish names derived from phrases and clauses

Some fish names are derived from phrases and clauses, as in:

- 
- (a) Egbe-n-efe-nku:  
Eagle that flaps wings (fish that looks like a kite)
  - (b) Ata-n-ta-aja:  
Drinking and chewing sand (fish that thrives on shallow water).

### The Semantics of Fish Names

Fish names in Oguta culture can be assigned to the following classes according to their lexical meaning.

(i) *Fish names reflecting prestige and power, e.g.:*

- (a). Echim
- (b). Asa
- (c). Aja
- (d). Akọ

(ii) *Fish names reflecting beauty: two fish names stand out in this class, e.g.:*

- (a). Asa
- (b). Nkọrọ

Both fishes are used to describe individuals who are beautiful, flirtatious and vane.

(iii) *Fish names reflecting love, e.g.:*

- (a) Asa
- (b) Ahumahamanidi

(iv) *Fish names reflecting hatred, e.g.:*

- (a) Okpo
- (b) Ogbowu

(v) *Fish names representing personality traits, e.g.:*

- (a) Nkọrọ (flirtatious)
- (b) ọmi (unreliable)
- (c) Nchicha (smallish and restless)
- (d) Mkpurukpuru (short)
- (e) Mgbitimambi (dwarfish)
- (f) Opo (untidy, messy)
- (g) Owuwu (fearlessness, defiance)
- (h) Ubu na ifuru (chameleon quality)
- (i) ọkwujọ (indiscriminatory association habit)
- (j) Mpọ (ugliness, especially with fat cheeks)
- (k) Atuma (cheap/notorious)
- (l) Arantaja (spoilt child)
- (m) Utu (timidity, antisocial, melancholic)
- (n) Utu (bulky eyed)

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(vi) *Fish names with mystical meaning, e.g.:*

- (a) Ebi
- (b) Erei
- (c) ụkawụ
- (d) Agba
- (e) Abụbaramiji

(vii) *Fish names reflecting poverty, e.g.:*

- (a) Apupa
- (b) Opo
- (c) Anyancha
- (d) Okpo (mgbe n' ako), (amara)
- (e) Ekemanya

### **Socio-Cultural Significance of Fish Names**

Virtually all fish names listed under the semantics of fish names have very interesting and intriguing socio cultural significance. But in this section only four will be recalled according to their identified semantic fields and discussed from the socio-cultural perspective.

#### *(i) Prestige and power*

Fish names, Echim, Asa, and Akọ symbolize prestige and power. They are used during ceremonial occasions for entertainment. These events are title taking during ceremonies such as Igbu agụ, Ishi iji, Iri nzere and during festivals such as Owu, Omerife, Mmanwụ, Arụgu (Borrowed from other riverine areas in the River state) Okoroshi and Igbu igbo. It is important to note that these prestigious and power-laden fish types are used for title taking involving men only. They are not allowed for female title taking such as "Igbu efi". If any woman dares to include any of these in her "Igbu efi" title taking, she is sanctioned since this is regarded as a violation of the ground rules for title taking. Thus one would be right to conclude that in Oguta culture, fish is "gendered".

#### *(ii) Love and Hatred*

The fish Asa is also a symbol of love. Another fish in this category is Ahumahumanidi. This onomatopoeic fish name has an interesting social history. In the days when fishes were abundant and men indulged in fishing expeditions, they usually returned with a boat full of all kinds of fish. As soon as the boat baits on the water front [ahuma(ugbo)], the wife selects a special fish and roasts (ahumani) it for the husband (di). Thus, the name ahumahumanidi means "roastable for the husband as soon as the boat baits". At the other end of the continuum are fishes like Okpo, Igirigu and ogbowu which symbolize hatred. Wives communicate to their husbands that all is not well in love zone by cooking with Okpo or Igirigu, Cooking with Asa for him communicates that all is well. A woman who cooks with ogbowu knows she should remove the dorsal protrusion on that fish. Cooking without doing that could earn her hatred from the husband.

(iii) *Fish names with mystical meaning*

Some fish names have mystical powers and are considered as taboos for certain Oguta villages, e.g.:

| <i>Fish</i>           | <i>Village</i>    |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Erei                  | Umunkwokomoshi    |
| Ebi                   | Ogwuma            |
| ɔkawu                 | -                 |
| Agba                  | Umuosu            |
| Abubaramiji (Ada-aja) | All title holders |

Echim is revered among Oguta people. In the traditional home, a child whose father is alive or who has an elder brother or uncle cannot eat the head and the tail of Echim. If he buys Echim, he is expected to send those two parts to one of his elders. In fact, there was a time when you could not even buy Echim unless it is to be used for taking a title.

(iv) *Fish Names as Tool for Education and Information*

As a component of the indigenous knowledge of the Oguta people, fish names are used to educate children. Sometimes, this is done in form of teasing. For example, the fish name “Ifuru” is used in a tongue twister, for teaching children how to pronounce the sound /f/.

Usually, a child who has lost a frontal tooth is asked to pronounce “Ifuru”. His attention is then drawn to the quality and quantity of air that escapes through the gap between his teeth. This represents some form of indigenous knowledge of phonology (how sounds are pronounced). When the child pronounces “Ifuru” with more than the required air flow and a faulty pronunciation, his peers and the adults around tease him by singing:

“Onye eze nfo shi n’ ifuru bu ofofoo”

Another fish name that features in a song is Adaja. However, it is mainly for teasing somebody with a protruding mouth (The fish Adaja, has a protruding mouth also). This is called “Ikpe- ikpe in Oguta dialect of Igbo. The Adaja song reads:

Adaja sujama ɔnu  
Nwa onye uwa sujama ɔnu

During fishing expeditions/outings, a member of the group, when he makes a catch is expected to inform the others. The fishes “ɔfu” and “Egu” are popularly used for passing such information. The person who makes a catch, no matter the type of fish breaks the news with a song:

Ndibe ani n’ ɔbuni Akpata – ɔfu- o  
Egu ɔnu ngo

Finally, children are also taught using fish names as proverbs. For example, when a child is unremorseful, his/her attention is drawn to that with a proverb.

Ana ekwu okwu Owụwụ, Owụwụ n' ama n'ose.

When a child is acting spoilt, he/she is warned about the need to change attitude, otherwise it will be difficult to adjust to life.

Example:

onye jiri Atuma mua ni.

The analysis of fish names provided above, do not serve only a documentation function. They also have implications for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

### **Implications for the Millennium Development Goals**

As part of the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, UNESCO encourages discussions on indigenous traditions and ecology as many of the indigenous peoples, their cosmologies and ritual practices are actually in danger of being extinguished by absorption into mainstream societies and by destruction of indigenous homelands through resource extraction. As observed in the background to this study, the fishes, in Oguta water (Ogbuide, ọbana, Urashi, etc) are on the decline as a result of the heat and pollution caused the environment by exploration and production activities of the oil companies operating in the area, the dredging of the water fronts by greedy contractors, blockade of creeks, canals and tributaries by oil companies. There is therefore the need, through a study of this nature to sensitize stakeholders on the value of the Oguta fish culture which should be preserved by all means.

Secondly, Oguta as a community, has a cumulative body of indigenous knowledge of which the fish culture, fish naming and classification system is an integral part. This local and indigenous knowledge is a key resource for empowering the community to combat marginalization, poverty and impoverishment. There is need to make the Oguta community an emerging knowledge society through the judicious harnessing of the knowledge generated from within and knowledge entering from outside. This one of the major challenges of globalization, and an essential step towards translating commitments to respect cultural diversity into meaningful action. Moreover, UNESCO (2002) lays emphasis on initiatives that focus on the interface between local and indigenous knowledge and the Millennium Development Goals of poverty eradication and environmental sustainability, stressing the importance of long-tested traditional knowledge systems that can enable communities to survive and sustain themselves in a changing world while maintaining environmental integrity. The Oguta fishing culture if revived to its lost glory will be such an initiative.



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**Appendix 1: Fish Names Corpus**

- (1) Abubaramiji: Now extinct; flat smallish bony fish; in the family of Apupa herbivorous; coffee brown in colour.
- (2) Afiara:
- (3) Aja: in the family of Tilapia; can weigh as much as 35kg when fully grown; bonny fish with scales; migratory; has the ability of crawling from one water mass to another up to 1km; also called Nkpurukpuru because of its special shape.
- (4) Akata-Igwe: (Iron Fish); has the hardest scale of all the fish in Oguta water scale can only be removed through roasting. Bonny fish; herbivorous; timid and primitive, inhabits muddy swamps; weighs about 2kgs when fully grown.
- (5) Akata-Ukoro: (in the family of iron fish); hard scales; bonny fish; has a snake like structure; not as timid as Akata –igwe in the sense that you can observe it when you approach a lonely water front.
- (6) Ako: Fleshy fish; bonny with very hard scales; fresh water fish; herbivorous can weigh as much as 50kg.
- (7) Akunu: Tiny fish about the size of the tail finger; scaly; bonny; herbivorous; weighs about 10grms when fully grown; likes fresh water.
- (8) Amani: Shaped like the sea salmon; bonny with silvery scales as well; likes fresh water and space; moves in a school of thousands.
- (9) Anyancha: Bonny fish; moves usually in school; weighs less than 5gms when fully grown; herbivorous; seen mostly as food for carnivorous fishes and can be used as bet for fishing.
- (10) Apupa: Small bonny fish; belongs to the same class as “Okpirikpo”. “Nori”, “Ishikamkpi”, “Nchicha”, “Nkoro”, and “Ahumahumanidi”, Every fishing outing, especially with net or baskets will likely produce all the species of Apupa. One in particular is usually roasted by the wife of the fisherman to snack with while waiting for the main dish, hence the name a Ahumahumanidi; which means roastable for the husband.
- (11) Arantaja: Usually found at the front line of the water very close to the sand looks like Akunu; quite anti-social; lonely fish; almost extinct.
- (12) Asa: (Eze-azu) scaly; cartilaginous; can weigh as much as 50kg when fully grown and has the most stream lined structure of all the fishes; has a tapering head, small eyes and a nail –like tail has the potential of moving at 60/km/h; omnivorous; symbolizes beauty because of the design and streamlined nature of the fish skin.
- (13) Ebi: scale-skinned: cartilaginous; lives in the mud; has the highest survivalist instinct of all the fishes known in this area in that it can stay without food for one

year and in extreme conditions can feed on itself by eating the tail and fins; when trapped by water recessions in the mud, it can stay with minimal moisture for about a year. Weighs as much as 30kg when fully grown. Has one of the highest dynamics of irritability in that it can speed –meander in mud in grassy water and can speed in clean water at the rate of about 45km/hrs per hour; Omnivorous.

(14) Echim: (botanical name: *Clarias*); Bonny fish; the biggest fish known to oguta culture; can weigh as much as 50kg when fully grown; smooth skinned; has the ability of crawling from one water mass to another up to 1km, thus is migratory.

(15) Egu: (Tilapia); can grow up to 5kg in size; scaly bonny; likes fresh water the most; very populous and thus will be difficult to get extinct.

(16) Egbenafenku: A birdlike fish with two wings like fans; bonny about the size of the tail finger; herbivorous; now almost extinct.

(17) Eti: Boney with a protruding lip; likes swampy waters; weighs about 1kg in adulthood; herbivorous; has a reflective stone on the dorsal part of the head that can glow in darkness.

(18) Ifuru: (Silver Fish); widely framed; bonny fish with silvery scales; likes fresh water and space.

(19) Ifi: Long; cylindrical in shape; dark scales; bonny fish; timid and primitive, herbivorous; inhabits muddy swamps; weighs about 3kgs when full-blown.

(20) Ikiriko: (Moonlight Fish); small sized; weighs only about 5grms in adulthood; boney; herbivorous; also has on the top its head a reflective stone that can glow in darkness.

(21) Ishikamkpi; in the class of Nchicha and Nkoro

(22) Mgbitimangbi: Dwarf fish; scaley; bonny fish; about double the size of the centre finger; incredibly bloody; primitive timid; inhabits muddy swampys.

(23) Mpo: Streamlined like amani; highly social water front fish; feeds on remains from human waste, mainly food crumbs; weighs about 500grms when fully grown.

(24) Nnori: in the class of Nchicha and Okirikpo.

(25) Odoba: smaller sized mpo.

(26) Ofu; Mid way between catfish and Ugana; has two nails at the sides of the head smooth skinned, herbivorous.

(27) Ogbowu: (class of Ugana); has a dorsal fin towards the tail sides weighs about 1kg; boney; smooth skinned; herbivorous.

(28) Oguna: (*Clarias*) ; dwarf fish; does not weigh more than 500 grms; crawls; also cannot travel for more than 10 metres.

(29) Okpo: has multiple species, up to ten; sharp nails (one at the dorsal part of the head and two at the sides); has an ant-hill shaped head with a short tapering body towards the tail; can weigh 5kg when fully grown while the smallest specie can weigh just 10grams (called Opko-Ikennga).

(30) Okpo; an Ako that has not grown into maturity

(31) Omi: (Eel family); snake like; skinned; dark fish; herbivorous; weighs only about 200grms when fully grown.

(32) Okwujo: (Balloon fish); small sized; with leather – like skin; can weigh about 300grms; retains an air sack into which it can pump air to inflate its size ten fold; herbivorous.

(33) Oriri: (Electric fish); has very smooth skinned; with jelly-like liquid in between the outer and the inner scales; can weigh as much as 10kg when fully grown; emits electric currents as a defense mechanism, thus can shock when touched; electric current reserved in it's abode to ward off predators; herbivorous.

(34) Owuwu: (Barakuda; dog fish); has all the characteristic of Ukawu but with diminished potentials in size and activities.

(35) Ubunaifuru: Flat paddle-like fish; has two colours; one side dark like Ubu and the other silvery like Ifuru; boney; carnivorous; can weigh 500 grams when fully grown.

(36) Ubu: Long dark bonny fish; timid and primitive; likes to inhabit grooves inside swampy water; long and flat and weighs about 3kg when fully grown herbivorous

(37) Ugana: (Nail fish ); silvery coloured fish; with three “nails” at the head (one at the dorsal part of the head and othertwo at the sides of the head ); smooth skinned and herbivorous; can weigh as much as 20kgs when fully grown.

(38) Ukawu: (Barakuda; dog fish); with head shaped like of a dog; scaly average sized; weighs only about 1kg when fully grown; likes fresh wate; has very sharp teeth that can cut the most sophisticated non –metal string; has the ability to leap above the water at a height of about 6 feet and cover a distance of about 60ft can leap from one mass of water into another carnivorous.

(39) Ukporokwuma: Simply a small sized ugana

(40) ushi – Asa: (Mock Ask ); shaped like Asa at the head but has a propeller shaped tail; Bonny; herbivorous weighs about 5kgs at most.

### 33. Issues in Translating Ibibio Salutations into French

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People's cultural, linguistic, religious and scientific ideas have been expressed in different languages around the world. These have passed into other languages, promoting knowledge, understanding, friendship and cooperation among nations. Thus, new ideas have been communicated from different languages to others. Similarly, the rich concepts of Ibibio, a Nigerian language, can be conveyed in different contexts and situations through the translation process into other languages. However, translating them should require some artistic approach and some translation methods. This paper is an attempt in that direction, focusing on the translation of Ibibio salutations into French. It surveys the role Linguistics plays in the art of translation and how this can help the translator to achieve his objectives satisfactorily. The author narrows this down to morphological, semantic, syntactic, phonological as well as sociolinguistic issues that have a bearing to this paper. He concludes that Ibibio concepts such as salutations, discussed in this paper, are translatable into other languages with French as a good example.

#### **Resume**

Les idées culturelles, linguistiques, religieuses et scientifiques d'un peuple ont été exprimées dans des langues différentes autour du monde. Celles-ci sont passées dans d'autres langues, promouvant la connaissance, l'entente, l'amitié et la coopération entre les nations. Ainsi, de nouvelles idées ont été communiquées des langues différentes aux autres. Pareillement, les riches concepts de la langue ibibio, une langue nigériane, peuvent se transmettre de contextes et situations différents aux autres langues par les procès traductionnels. Pourtant, leur traduction doit exiger certaines approches artistiques et quelques méthodes traductologiques. Cette communication est une tentative dans cette direction, concentrant sur la traduction des salutations ibibio en français. Il met à l'étude le rôle que joue la linguistique dans l'art de traduction et la façon que ceci peut aider le traducteur à réaliser son objectif d'une manière satisfaisante. L'auteur limite ceci aux questions morphologiques, sémantiques, syntaxiques, phonologiques ainsi que sociolinguistiques qui ont rapport avec cette communication. Il conclut que les concepts ibibio tels que les salutations discutées ici sont traduisibles en d'autres langues avec le français comme un bon exemple.

#### **1. Introduction**

In his book, *A Grammar of the Ibibio Language*, Essien (1990:ix) describes Ibibio as a language, which belongs to one of the largest families of languages in Africa. People who are also known as Ibibio in Akwa Ibom State speak Ibibio in the South-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Ibibio is therefore a reference to an ethnic group and the language, which the people speak. In other words, Ibibio is



ethnoglossonym, the name by which both the people and their language are called (Okon and Ekpenyong 2002:13). Among the Ibibio, it is fashionable for occurrences or activities to be expressed through the association of things such as that of the individual with a particular event as in the case of salutations.

Many times however, the salutations can only be understood through an explanation of what is implied rather than through word for word interpretation. This is of interest to the translator who seeks to explain how concepts such as salutations of Ibibio origin can be translated into other languages. Consequently, the *modus operandi* should consist naturally in the application of a translational strategy considered appropriate to the discourse, in this case, equivalent, one of the techniques available in translating, as a way of achieving the desired French equivalents of the Ibibio greetings under consideration. (cf. Vinay et al. 1977:46).

## 2. The Concept of Salutation in Ibibio

Salutations among the Ibibio as expressed through the Ibibio language are complex and intriguing. They are complex in the sense that there is scarcely an event going on among the people, which does not attract an appropriate salutation. A thing to note about the Ibibio salutation is that just as their English or French counterparts, they are expressed either as questions or as statements. They begin with salutations of the day in general to those involving particular activities of the individuals. Eka (2000:35) comments as follows:

With regard to greetings... the majority of African languages have specific greetings for two sets of time – morning and evening. In Nigeria and in many African countries, there are numerous additional forms of greetings... For example, if someone is engaged in a piece of work, Nigerians from many linguistic groups will say things which may be interpreted thus; “you have done well”, “You are doing well”, “You are at work”, “I greet you”...

Eka comments specifically on the nature and the forms of Ibibio salutations, saying:

Among the Ibibio, the language situation gives room for specific greetings to someone for instance standing, sitting, eating singing, playing, reading, writing, washing or building (cf. p. 35).

Also emphasizing this fact is Eyoh (1999:135-136), according to whom Nigerian languages such as Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Ibibio, etc. are rich in many forms of greetings, with Ibibio for example having greetings for a variety of occasions.

## 3. Ibibio Salutations and their Translations into French.

Ibibio salutations cut across various occasions, times and events. In this section, we will both give examples of their various forms as well as provide their equivalents or translations in French.

### **3.1 Salutations of the Day**

Among the Ibibio, as also with others around the world, the morning begins every new day. The usual salutation at this time of the day in the Ibibio culture is as shown below:

### **3.2 Èmésìèré? (vous avez vu le petit matin?)**

«Èmésìèré?» is the usual morning salutation among the Ibibio. Literally it is asking, “you have seen the dawn?” or “you have seen a new day?” (cf. Kaufman 1985:363). If we were to translate “èmésìèré?” word-for-word as seen in the gloss, such translation would make no sense in French language or to the French as it would amount to a mere question about the early part of the day. That is why we look for its natural equivalent in the target language (TL), which is “bonjour” in French (cf. Taber and Nida 1974:12). The usual response in a similar question form from the person greeted is “èmésìèré + òdé?”, resulting in “èmésìèré òdé?”. “Òdé” means “aussi” in French, hence “bonjour aussi” as it were. Here although the Ibibio salutation under consideration is in question form, its French counterpart is not.

### **3.3 Mmékò-m-ó or èkò-m dó ó (je vous salue)**

This is another form of salutation of the Ibibio and is not time-specific, as in 3.2. It can be heard at any time of the day. The literal translation in brackets, “Je vous salue,” could as well be admissible in French. But they do not usually greet that way. Two short options are rather used in French: “salut” or “bonjour.” The response to this greeting is “mmékò-m” + “nde” i.e. “mmékò-m òdé”, as in 3.2 above, and means “I greet you too” or “Je vous salue aussi”. Others simply respond with “sòsòjò,” which means “merci.” The salutation here admits no question but an expression of good will.

### **3.4 Sòj òdém (soyez fort dans le corps)**

Here is another salutation popular among the Ibibio, and can be heard at any time just like the one in 3.3 above. Translated literally it would sound like what is in the gloss, yet it is not the French equivalent of the Ibibio greeting under consideration. The French would rather say something like “portez-vous bien,” “allez-vous bien,” etc. As may be noted, the salutation here and that of the target language (TL) equivalent are wishes or statements without questions.

**3.5 Ídém-é? or ídém m̀fò ò?”** also feature prominently among the Ibibio salutations in the course of the day. They come in the form of questions as shown in this segment. When translated word-for-word both mean “votre corps?” in French. These salutations are asking after the health of someone in Ibibio and find equivalent in the French greeting “comment allez-vous?” The response “ídém sòsòjò ” (le corps est fort. Merci), corresponds to “Je vais bien. Merci”, or simply “Bien. Merci” in French.

### **3.6 Ábá díé? (comment va-t-il?)**

The salutation here is the same as the one in 3.5 above and is heard in the form of a question as is also shown here. It is used to find out about how an individual is

getting on just as the literal translation in the gloss suggests. The salutation which is not time-bound finds appropriate equivalent in “ça va?” or “comment ça va?” in French. The usual response is “ídíòkkò”, translated “pas mal,” its closest natural equivalent in French.

### **3.7 Ésièrè (jusqu’ au petit matin)**

This is the salutation of the night as people depart company. In it, the Ibibio is wishing to see the other party at daybreak of the next day as seen in the word-for-word rendering in the gloss. However, the French would not say this greeting the way it is suggested here. They view the greeting in terms of the night to be spent pleasantly when people part company, hence “bonne nuit” which is also the natural equivalent of the Ibibio salutation under consideration. No questions are involved in both the source language (SL) and the target language (TL).

## **4. Other Specified Salutations**

In addition to the above, Ibibio salutations can be heard at other various moments in relation to specific activities and the individuals performing them irrespective of the time of the day. Such greetings cover many areas including those of going out, returning home, visiting, departing, lying down, standing up, going to a place, appreciation, expression of sympathy, etc. These and their translations are discussed below.

### **4.1 Salutation at Meal time/Ké ádíá? or ọsàk ádíá? (vous mangez?)**

This salutation is expressed among the Ibibio specifically when someone is met eating. It is used as part of the people’s culture and as a way of wishing somebody to enjoy his or her meal. This is the way the French also see and use it, hence “bon appétit” being their own version of the same form of salutation (cf. Robert 1977:86). “Vous mangez?” as seen in the gloss is merely a word-for-word or “formal” rendering of the greeting while “bon appétit” provides the natural equivalent as earlier said. “Sọsọṇọ” (merci) is the usual response. The linguistic divergence between Ibibio and French may be noted in the presence of a question in the former and its absence in the latter in the salutation under consideration.

### **4.2 Salutation at Work/Ké ànám? or ọsàk ànám? (vous travaillez?)**

The salutation here is reserved for those found in the process of doing one kind of work or the other. Its aim, apart from being culturally relevant or motivated, is to appreciate people and their work and to spur them on in what they are doing. It could find equivalent or translation in “bon travail” in French, especially the kind of French spoken in some francophone African countries.

### **4.3 Salutation on Going out/Kàá dí! (allez et revenez)**

When somebody is going out, the usual greeting is “Kàá dí” Literally, it means “go and come” or “go to come” in French as contained in the gloss. The French equivalent is “au revoir” literally, “when we see again” which is also the translation of “kàá dí!” in French.

#### **4.4 Salutation on Traveling/Tám sàṅá! (marchez bien)**

Among the Ibibio, this is the salutation to someone who is going on a journey and serves as a wish to the traveler to have a safe, peaceful and successful journey. It is not time-specific. The French equivalent is “bon voyage!”, and therefore the translation of “tám sàṅá!” in Ibibio. “Kàá dí!” is also applicable. In both languages, the forms of the greeting under consideration and their utterance is simply a wish, an expression or a statement without any question accompanying.

#### **4.5 Salutation on Returning Home/Àményoṅ? (vous êtes de retour?)**

This is the way the Ibibio welcome back someone who had been away on a journey but in the form of a question. In the gloss we have “vous êtes de retour?” which is the literal rendering of the greeting in French. The French equivalent, which is “bienvenue,” and the translation of “áményoṅ” is without any form of question that characterizes the source language.

#### **4.6 Salutation to a Visitor/Àmédí? (vous êtes venu?)**

This form of salutation is reserved for the visitor among the Ibibio. Literally, it means “you have come?” in English and the same idea of a visitor that has come is true of French as seen in the gloss. It is a non-time-specific greeting that may be said any time of the day and is used to demonstrate that the visitor is welcome. The French equivalent is “bienvenue” (cf. *ibid* 183). It can be observed that “áményoṅ?” and “ámédí?” translate as “bienvenue” in the target language. That is their natural equivalent in French.

#### **4.7 Salutation to a Visitor Departing/Sàṅá sàṅ (marchez sain et sauf)**

This greeting is said when a visitor is departing among the Ibibio, (cf. Kaufman 1985:375). Literally “sàṅá sàṅ!” means “walk safely” as can be seen in the French gloss. It is a salutation whereby the departing visitor is wished a safe walk back to his or her abode. The corresponding French greeting is “adieu,” hence the translation for “sàṅá sàṅ!”. Either way, the salutation is expressed as a statement and admits no question at all.

#### **4.8 Salutation expressing appreciation/Sọsọṅọ (merci)**

“Sọsọṅọ” is the word used in expressing appreciation among the Ibibio. It is not time-bound and is frequently in use by the people. It finds a direct equivalent in the French “merci.”

#### **4.9 Salutation to the Sick/ Sọṅ ídém (soyez fort dans le corps)**

The Ibibio have a way of extending a greeting to the sick, and “sọṅ ídém” is the expression that is often used, wishing for the sick to regain his or her health. The French have a similar expression “remettez-vous,” equally used in asking the sick to regain their health (cf. Robert, *op cit* p. 1657). That also serves as the translation of “sọṅ ídém” in French.

#### **4.10 Salutation expressing pity or sympathy/Mbọmó ó! (quel dommage!)**

In addition to the salutations reserved for the sick, the Ibibio also have salutations used for the expression of sympathy. The usual word is “mbọmó ó!” which simply corresponds to (quel dommage!) in French.

#### 4.11 Salutation to an Achiever/Àménám! (vous avez bien fait!)

This one is commonly used in showering encomium on people who have successfully carried out one thing or the other. When translated word-for-word it means, “you have done well!” as seen in the gloss. The French would normally say “félicitations!” as a compliment to someone in the same circumstance as the Ibibio, hence this also serves as the translation for “àménám!” (cf. *ibid* p. 768). As the reader must have noted, salutations in 4.7-4.11 in Ibibio and French all take the form of statements without questions.

#### 4.23 Salutation to someone at Home/Tiè dó ó? (vous voilà assis?)

Just as we have mentioned earlier, there is hardly an activity carried out among the Ibibio for which there is not an appropriate greeting. “Tiè dó ó?” as a form of greeting, is another way of demonstrating this. Consequently, and as an example, whenever an Ibibio meets somebody at home or elsewhere, if he or she is sitting down, “tiè dó ó?” is one of the usual salutations uttered, meaning “there you are sitting down?” as captured in the gloss in French. Although the French may not have this as one of their greetings, they do have other forms of salutations that are clear equivalents to that of the Ibibio under consideration, which also serve as translations of “tiè dó ó?” These are “salut,” “bonjour,” etc. Commenting on “salut”, Robert (*ibid* p. 1758) describes it as:

Démonstration de civilité (par le geste ou par la parole), qu’on fait en rencontrant quelqu’un... Geste ou ensemble de gestes que l’on fait pour saluer.

A demonstration of politeness (in gesture or in word), which is done on meeting someone... Gesture or gestures in general which people do to greet. (Translation ours)

The fact is that “tiè dó ó?” in Ibibio is one greeting by which a person’s attention is drawn to another person. The same is applicable to “salut” or “bonjour” in French (cf. Robert *et al* 2002:919).

### 5. The Translation/Linguistic Interface

As seen thus far, we have attempted translating a number of Ibibio salutations into French. In the process we have witnessed the interaction between Ibibio and French for the purpose of generating meaning. The role of linguistics, in relation to translation generally speaking and with particular reference to this paper can be seen in terms of morphology, phonology, semantics and sociolinguistics, etc. These linguistic issues all of which are relevant to translation are examined briefly here as they are applicable to our work.

#### 5.1 Morpho-semantic Issues

As a level of linguistic description, morphology examines the internal structure of words of a language (Udofot 2005:1). However, the translator, an applied linguist, is concerned with the meanings generated from such words in a given language in relation to another language. According to Baker (1999:4), this generating of meaning is what Translation exists to accomplish. Baker, apart from informing us about the role of Translation, also takes a look at that of Linguistics, seeing it as a



discipline which studies language both in its own right and as a tool for generating meaning. It can be argued from the above that both Translation and Linguistics have meaning as the prime aim. Furthermore, Ndimele (1999:193) sees linguistics as a fluid discipline, which interacts with a number of other disciplines to provide an understanding of the general principles of the structure of language. He also observes that these principles cannot be applied only to the study of particular languages, but also to the various areas where language is put into use. There is no area or discipline that can provide an insight into the principles of the structure of language more than translation in the process of seeking meanings to the different words of a language due to the fact that according to Udofot (2004:1), one word can have several meanings.

## **5.2 Morpho-phonological Issues**

According to Urua (200:55), tone is an important element in African Languages. It is used to make lexical as well as grammatical distinctions in these languages. Accordingly, Ibibio, like French with its accents, or any other language with its peculiar features, has its own phonology to be applied when necessary (cf. Ukut 1995:26), which is why the meeting point between Translation and Linguistics is worthy of note. In other words, Translation and Linguistics will always meet and will always affect each other phonologically, syntactically, semantically and translationally, etc., hence their closeness as relatives in fostering a successful inter-lingual communication.

Looking at such linguistic features as tone-marks in Ibibio vis-à-vis the present study gives some insight into what Ndimele and Baker earlier cited have posited. Put differently, the semantics of the Ibibio lexical items in the salutations would be difficult to determine without appropriate tone-marks as tone is a common feature of African languages including Ibibio (cf. Akpan 2006). Tone helps in distinguishing the meaning of words, which are otherwise segmentally identical (cf. Ndimele 2006). In Ibibio and according to Essien (1990:xvii):

Tones are marked ... as follows:

- (a) 3 High tone as in *dép*: 'buy'
- (b) 4 Low tone as in *dèp*: 'rain'
- (c) 0 Down stepped tone as in the second syllable *úké*: 'where?'
- (d) 9 Rising tone as in the first syllable of *ě́nám?*: 'who has done it?'
- (e) 8 Ordinary falling tone as in the second syllable of *únâm*: 'animal' (cf. Urua, op. cit. p. 27)

Let us see how this is applicable to this paper and how tone has led to the generating of meaning in the Ibibio salutations, which we have translated into French using the following examples:

- i. *Sàǵá*: *walk*  
     *\*Sáná*: *be clean*
- ii. *Ídém*: *body*  
     *\*Ídêm*: plural of *ńdêm*, a god or goddess (cf. Kaufman p.307).



- 
- iii.    Ábá: *be* as in *ábá dié*?  
       \*Àbà: cavity, forty, anymore etc.  
       \*Àbá: a city in south-east Nigeria.
  
  - iv.     Sọṅ: *be strong*  
       \*Sọṅ: to avoid, to walk in a stealthy manner (cf. Kaufaman p.382)
  
  - v.      Ídémé?: *How are you?*  
       \*Ìdémé: to silence somebody
  
  - vi.     Díé?: *How?*  
       \*Díè: Come on
  
  - vii.    Tíé: *sit*  
       \*Tíe: Looks like an English word without the diacritic.

As seen in i-vii, the tones we have used are just a few: low tone (4), high tone (3) and the ordinary falling tone (8). These made it possible for us to arrive at the right meanings of homonyms in Ibibio (cf. Lyons 1985 in Onukaogu 1993:254).

### 5.3 Morpho-syntactic Issues

Syntax examines the rules governing the formation of linguistic units larger than the word in order to produce grammatically correct sentences in a language (Tomori 2004:21). The translator makes use of the grammar of the language in question in terms of parts of speech such as pronouns, nouns and adjectives among others, bearing in mind that some grammatical properties do not exist in Nigerian languages. In Ibibio for example the pronoun does not show gender such as “le” and “la” which are masculine/feminine in French, or he/she which are equally masculine/feminine in English. Although these aspects of the language have not featured in the present paper, suffice it to mention that they do exist, and constitute grammatical problem in Ibibio, hence a translation difficulty that can always be resolved contextually (Newmark 1981:113).

### 5.4 Sociolinguistic Issues

Sociolinguistics is relevant and of interest to translation since the translator is involved both with the lexical items in one language and their translation into another language. What then is sociolinguistics? One may ask. In Ekpenyong (2003:327) language is said to be the place of an extremely vast analysis implying multiple relationships e.g. that between language and the society i.e. sociolinguistics; the relationship and the difference between a given language and another which usually results in comparative linguistics, contrastive analysis and translation. In a paper such as this, the issue of sociolinguistics can be seen where applicable in terms of the person being addressed in Ibibio and French, which is usually the second persons, either singular or plural.

In French as an honorific language, the relationship between the person speaking and that of the person spoken to is determined by the use of *tu* or *vous* as the case may be. This is not the case in Ibibio where only *áfó* is used in place of

the French *tu* and *vous*. However, the status of the person spoken to can be determined in Ibibio by the insertion of words such as *mmá* (madam), *ète* (sir), *dà* or *àdâ* (terms of intimacy between men and women of equal status). What this means for the Ibibio salutations under consideration is that just as in their French counterparts, the status of the person greeted can be added to him or her, e.g. *Mmá àmésièrè* (bonjour madame), or *ète àmédì* (bienvenue Monsieur).

### Conclusion

When we started, the aim was to translate some frequently used Ibibio salutations into French through the process of the closest natural equivalents. That we have done and have also established that translating from Ibibio, an African language into French, a European language, is quite possible and vice versa (cf. Ekpenyong 2003:16). In doing so, we have seen the indisputable advantage which the knowledge of Linguistics and its application can offer the translator or the students of Translation (cf. Ekpenyong and Akpan 2003:25). Consequently, the place of semantics, phonology, syntax and sociolinguistics as it affects Ibibio, has been examined. In particular, we have seen that as far as Ibibio is concerned, tones have a crucial role to play in the selection of the right meaning of words as a demonstration of the usefulness of phonology as a level of linguistic analysis in the translation process.

In the present paper this level of linguistic analysis has proved to be quite pertinent with regard to words that sound alike, are spelt alike, but vary in meanings. In the domain of syntax, we have seen how words in the different salutations have been brought together to form sentences that are grammatically correct with respect to the persons addressed. Finally, and from the sociolinguistic point of view, we have seen that in Ibibio, *áfó*, the equivalent of *tu* and *vous* in French, determines the rapport between persons in a conversation and that such words as *Mmá*, *Èté*, *Dà* or *Àdâ*, etc., can determine the status of those addressed.

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## **34. Developing a Course-Effective Programme in the Teaching of English & Communication Skills in Ahmadu Bello University**

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This paper is expected to expose teachers of English in Nigerian institutions of higher learning to current theories and practices in teaching English at this level. The ultimate goal is English for development-oriented education. Part of the way this goal can be achieved is through making the teachers more knowledgeable and professionally competent in the field. If the language teaching is to have any real and lasting value, the principles on which teachers base their classroom decisions must be current, feasible and sound. It is with these objectives in mind that a development-oriented course-effective approach to English and Communication Skills learning and teaching has been proposed in this paper.

### **Introduction**

Towards the middle of the 1960s, there was a growing dissatisfaction with the language proficiency of students in the Nigerian institutions of higher learning. The Ford Foundation report in 1966 on English Language teaching in Nigeria and the external examiners report of many of these institutions deplored the poor use of English language by students. As a result of this dissatisfaction, senates and academic boards of the institutions, especially the universities of Ibadan, Ife and Nigeria, Nsukka, decided to establish a compulsory English language course, which every undergraduate of the university must pass before he could graduate.

Ever since this initial decision of the early Nigerian universities, the Use of English course has grown from strength to strength all over institutions of higher learning under different names: study skills, English language and study skills, English and Communication skills, Basic English, General English, English 101 and nowadays, English for Specific Purposes and English for science and Technology, not because they follow the principles underlying the course, but in a bid to look current and sophisticated.

In some institutions, if a student fails the course in the first year, he repeats it in the second year, and if by his final year he still has not passed it, he repeats a year in order to qualify for a degree. In some, a pass in it is not necessary for a degree, once a credit in O' Level English is attained. Also, in some institutions, as much as four hours a week are given to the course (e.g. Federal University of Technology, Minna); in very many others, only two (or even one) sixty-minute sessions per week are given. Again, the credit units also vary: in many of the institutions, Use of English carries the least credit units, ranging from one to two. In Ahmadu Bello University, the course had two components: first semester, ENG 103 English and Communication Skills-2 credit units; and second semester, ENG

104 English for Academic Purposes-2 credit units. It was located in the former School of General and Remedial Studies. In 1996, the course was transferred to the Department of English and Literary Studies, and the two components were merged and we now have GENS 103: English and Communication Skills.

### **Theoretical Bases**

A Language programme that will be affective must be based on sound theoretical principles of language teaching and learning. The programme grew during the era when the principles were yet to be developed into a coherent pattern and partly because the urgency that necessitated the development of the programme gave no room for an in-depth study of the theoretical principles. If the language teacher is to be effective, he should gain an insight into these learning principles and be able to apply them to appropriate classroom situation.

### **Language Theories and Practice**

There are five of such theories: traditional grammar, structural linguistics, transformational-generative grammar, notional-functional grammar and discourse analysis.

**Traditional Grammar:** A grammar based on earlier grammars of Latin or Greek origin that has applied to a language like English. It is actually an imposition of linguistic patterns of one language on another without cognisance of the peculiarities of that language; for example, some traditional grammarians stated that English has eight parts of speech, six cases and so on, simply because these features were prominent in Latin. Traditional grammar is notional (it believes that there are categories like tense, mood, gender, number), is prescriptive (handed over to learners to be memorised and applied), and relies on definitions of grammatical terms such as noun and verb than on an analytical approach which describes language properties in a systematic manner. Although the traditional grammar has lost almost all the credibility nowadays, its terminology is still largely being used in language teaching the world over.

English and Communication Skills programme emerged when the traditional approach had not been completely abandoned: its influence is still very much felt, especially in structural syllabus design which is in operation in many of the institutions. As Allen and Widdowson have rightly remarked:

The teacher who wishes to maintain a balanced view of linguistics should not overlook the fact that traditional grammar has many useful virtues. The traditional handbooks provided an array of terms and distinction which most of us use in learning to talk about our own language, and which many people continue to find serviceable throughout their lives.

(Allen and Widdowson, 1975)

The virtues of traditional grammar are still more or less reflected in the fact that its abandonment for modern approaches has not led to a remarkable improvement



in language teaching and learning in general. Falling standards is the cry of many schools and colleges, despite the so-called modern approaches.

*Structural Linguistics:* This is an approach to linguistics which stresses the importance of language as a system and which describes linguistic forms in terms of the problems they fill and the function they perform in these positions. From structural linguistics, come the terms slots and fillers: the slots being the positions and the fillers the forms that can fill these positions. Structural linguists such as Bloomfield and Fries studied the distribution of sound, words, and sentences within a language; that is, whether the sounds appear only at the beginning of words or the middle or the end. They described the word order of languages and used distributional features to isolate one linguistic item from another. Similar studies of distribution and classification were carried out in morphology and syntax. At the syntactic level, structure types such as statements, interrogatives, negatives, imperatives and notions such as tense, number, concord, gender are described by showing the various positions they can fill in structures of the language and their distributional features.

Although structural linguistics is supposed to be an improvement on the traditional grammar, it is not without its shortcomings: it is basically a surface level grammar which concentrates all efforts on the performance level, that is, sentences as spoken or written; it does not consider the deep structure layer of analysis. Again, it hardly sees language descriptions as anything beyond the sentence layer: a linguistic perception that is native for many reasons. Firstly, a sum total of the linguistic categories of a sentence does not necessarily give the true meaning of the sentences. Secondly, one may be able to analyse the syntactic forms of sentences of a language and still be unable to speak the language fluently. There is more to the business of communication in a language than what the grammatical forms of that language can offer.

The practical approach to structural linguistics is seen in the audio-lingual method, with the emphasis on aural-oral, mimicry-memorization method as well as the teaching of speaking and listening before reading and writing. The audio-lingual approach supports the use of dialogues, drills and other habit formation exercises as a way of internalising linguistic structures. The structural syllabus and the influence of contrastive analysis on the language programme are also a reflection of the structural linguistics.

*Transformational-Generative Grammar:* A set of grammar which was proposed by Chomsky in 1957 and which has since been developed by him and other linguists (e. g. Lakoff, 1971, Hyman, 1975; Chomsky and Halle, 1968). It is the type of grammar which attempts to define and describe, by a set of rules, all the grammatical sentences of a language and no ungrammatical ones. Transformational-generative grammar makes a distinction between competence and performance. Competence is the ideal native speaker-hearer internalised grammar of the language, and performance the actual use of the language which may be affected by false starts as well as psychological and social factors. Thus



competence may not be reflected very accurately in one's performance due to fatigue, lack of retention, excitement, nervousness and variability of tasks set.

Recently, transformational – generative grammar incorporated many other aspects not originally in its theoretical framework. Generative phonology, for example, describes the competence which the native speaker must have to be able to produce and understand the sound system of his language. It defines phonemes in terms of their distinctive features (whether high or low, tense, and so on.). Generative semantics considers all sentences as being generated from a semantic-based structure, which is a basic part of grammar from which all sentences can be generated. In generative semantics, syntactic rules operate on the meaning of a sentence to produce its form (Aitchinson, 1978). All these additions have transformed transformational generative theory from the original aspects (or standard theory) model to extended standard theory which has seen both transformational and phonological components as having effect on the semantic interpretation of a sentence.

Despite all the above criticisms of transformational–generative grammar, its influence on language learning theories is immense. This influence is seen in its cognitive learning theory, the distinction between competence and performance, re-establishment of the idea that language is rule-governed and not a mere habit-formation type of behaviour, the natural route to language acquisition, child language studies, and the universal concepts of grammar.

**Functional/Notional Grammar:** This is essentially a grammar of use as opposed to usage or systematic analysis of language structures. Three factors motivated the development of the functional-notional conceptual framework. First is the dissatisfaction with the sentence-based grammatical analysis of the traditional, structural and transformational generative grammarians. Second is the shift of emphasis that were going on in linguistics through the works of people like Halliday (1973) and Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). The third is the efforts of the council of Europe which convened a team of experts in 1971.

Halliday, for example, concentrated on how we can use English to perform a chosen function. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) set themselves the task of analysing interactions between teachers and pupils in the school classroom, an exercise which sharply deviated from the usual sentence analysis and the abstract tree diagrams of the transformational-generative grammarians. The council of Europe's influence was through the works of Wilkins (1973), Van Ek (1975) and Richterich (1973). Wilkins (1973) in particular developed two categories of analysis: a category of communication function which is the use to which language may be put and semantico-grammatical categories, later known as notions, which suggest the meaning and concepts the learners need in order to communicate. Wilkins (1973) gave a list of functions (or areas of use) to include: communicative or speech acts such as those involving threatening, greeting, expressing sympathy, inviting, disapproval, describing, exemplifying, and so on, and notions (or semantico-grammatical categories) to include categories such as time, location, duration, frequency, quantity and dimension, in which the human

mind as well as language, divides reality. According to Wilkins (1973), each of these concepts has a variety of grammatical features associated with it for example, the concept of duration associated with prepositions such as “for”, “since”, “from” and so on. Wilkins (personal communication, 1987) feels that this aspect of his grammar has been given less prominence by those who have attempted to apply the notional – functional approach.

With the development of the functional-notional grammar, a great revolution was witnessed in the field of language teaching. For example, the concepts of communicative language teaching and functional notional syllabus, which have now grown to be regarded as the best possibilities because of their overriding criterion of language use, interactive methodology and input from the learners themselves, emerged from this approach. Also growing out of the approach are the needs-analysis principle through which learners’ notional and functional language needs can be identified (Richterich, 1973); the threshold level ( a minimum level of language competence developed by van Ek, 1975); authentic language materials, communicative processes, communicative exercise types and communicative language testing (see Johnson, 1982 and Johnson and Porter, 1983). Numerous language teaching materials based on this approach are currently being used for effective language teaching in different parts of the world.

This does not mean that the functional–notional grammar is all-powerful and infallible. Of late, the approach has been criticised on many grounds. The criticisms are outside the scope of this paper.

The functional–notional syllabus is not powerful enough to predict all the various aspects of language use. Human communication is so complex that no one can actually predict all its functions. Because of the creative capacity of human beings, they may use various language forms in various situations, many of which cannot be predicted. For example, a language function taught in a lesson may be quite different from the immediate function a student may encounter outside the classroom. He needs creative power to be able to produce appropriate and acceptable sentences in such unpredictable circumstances.

English and Communication Skills programme has a lot to learn from the communicative approach and functional–notional grammar: the concern with language use, the needs analysis principle, interactive methodology, the fact that it is easily amenable to learners’ analytical capabilities (Wilkins, 1976) and the emphasis on the learner not the teacher. Beneficial as the approach is, it should never be seen as a replacement for other, older approaches.

**Discourse Analysis:** This is another linguistic development that should have a profound effect on the English and Communication skills course, but at the moment, does not. The emphasis is still on the sentence level grammar rather than beyond the sentence layer of analysis. The functional notional approach has a lot in common with discourse or rhetorical analysis, but they are not the same thing. Like the functional–notional grammar, discourse analysis presupposes a meaning-focus type of analysis. It is based on the principle that there is more to

communication than mere analysis of different parts of a sentence; emphasis must move on to how meaning is generated between sentences. Also like functional – notional grammar, the emphasis is on language use, that is, language which has been produced as a result of an act of communication.

Although the functional-notional approach has drawn quite a lot from discourse analysis, the two are different in many respects. Functional–notional grammar is specially designed for language teaching purpose, discourse analysis concerns itself with communication in general. Discourse analysis is a theoretical linguistic framework that is applicable to any form of discourse, whereas functional–notional is a practical approach restricted to communicative language teaching and syllabus design. The concern of discourse analysis is language function, that is, the function which language serves in expression of content (transactional function) and the function involved in expression of social relations and personal attitudes (interaction). It is not necessarily concerned with notions, except as they affect the functional use of language. The structures below are used to illustrate the transactional role of language. What can be gathered from them is more than what grammatical analysis can bring out:

- A: Have you a bed?
- B: I've got one but it's rather expensive.
- C: Let me have a look at it then.
- D: Certainly

There is coherence of discourse (one utterance leading to the other), ellipsis (omitting some words or phrase which the speaker expects the hearer to fill in) especially of words like “Have you a bed?”, substitution (e.g. of it for bed), information gap (something to convey which the hearer has not known before), turn taking (B waits for his turn to speak before speaking), illocutionary forces (e.g. those involving asking, explaining and requesting). All these are the business of communication and are beyond what sentence level grammar can handle effectively. They belong to the domain of discourse.

Our knowledge of discourse analysis has influenced language teaching and learning in various ways. It has enabled us to describe subject-specific rhetorical functions, for example, Trimble (1985) discussed the discourse of science and technology in his book *English for Science and Technology (EST)*. He identified the following rhetorical functions commonly found in written EST discourse, description, definition, classification, instructions, and visual-verbal relationship between a visual aid and its accompanying text (Trimble, 1985:11). Allen and Widdowson (1978) also identified definitions, descriptions, qualifications, and contrastive and corrective statements as rhetorical acts which commonly occur in the literature of social science (Allen and Widdowson, 1978:17) and Bhata (1987) has identified questioning, defining, description, discussion, legal argumentation, case referencing, direct and cross examination, persuasion and action directing, as some of the rhetorical functions typical of legal English.

For a course like English and Communication Skills that takes English across all curricular, discourse analysis is a valuable tool for describing and teaching specific purpose English to students of various disciplines. Again, It is just one of the tools and not only tool to use.

### **Second Language Learning Theories**

The weakness of many language programmes (English and Communication Skills inclusive), is not so much that of insufficient sound linguistic theories, but a lack of sound psycholinguistic backing. Many language teachers and planners are ignorant of the various second language learning theories underlying language teaching. These theories include older ones such as behaviourism, mentalism, cognitive-code learning and more modern ones such as affective learning factors, learners' strategies, and the role of formal instruction in language acquisition. Since this field is a highly extensive one, only a summary of these theories will be given here.

1. Behaviourist learning theory is a theory that regards all types of learning (not language learning alone) as a habit-formation type of activity. Habits arise when the learners is confronted with specific response (Skinner, 1957) without using concepts like the mind or ideas or any kind of mental behaviour. When this learning is reinforced by rewards, more learning takes place. The audio-lingual method, with its emphasis on mimicry, memorization, repetition and drills, is an outcome of behavioural learning theory; pattern practice drills still have a useful role in language teaching, especially if judiciously used. It may de-motivate adult learners if used too often.
2. Mentalistic theory is a direct attack on Skinners stimulus-response Learning Theory. The mentalists such as Chomsky (1957), Lenneberg (1967) and McNeil (1966 and 1970) emphasise the learners' innate capacity for acquiring language via the Acquisition Device (AD) which contains the universal grammar on which the natural route of language development rests. The theory is carried further to assume that the second language learner takes the same route as the first language learner in learning a second language (L2=L1 Hypothesis). In summary, their views of L1 acquisition are that language is human-specific; it exists as an independent faculty of the human mind; the primary determinant of L1 acquisition is the genetically endowed acquisition device which provides the child with a set of principles about grammar; that the process of acquisition consists of hypothesis testing by which means the grammar of the learner's mother tongue is related to the principles of universal grammar; and that the Acquisition Device atrophies with age (McNeil, 1966).  
Strictly connected to the mentalists' theory of language learning is the cognitive-code theory which sees learners as thinking beings and not mere habit-forming robots: they are able, through the rule governed thinking

process, to produce an infinite range of sentences from a finite and fairly rigid set of rules, as well as undertake problem solving tasks.

Doubts have been cast on the L2=L1 Hypothesis and the acquisition device is accepted with half a mind by many, simply because its total influence on language learning is yet to be fully determined. Adults are likely to acquire the rules of the language more rapidly than children because of the greater cognitive abilities. The rule governed behaviour proposed by the mentalists has had a lot of influence on many language programmes. Despite pressures from the adherent of audio-lingual and functional – notional theorist, rule giving and teaching are yet to disappear in many language classes; rule-governed texts are also very much with us.

3. Affective factors have been advanced as aspects that can highly influence second language acquisition. Among these factors are acculturation, intelligence, aptitude, attitude, motivation and personality.
4. Input and interaction factors are of great significance in the language learning process. Krashen (1981 and 1982) and Long (1983) have argued strongly for the exposure of learners to comprehensible input data before their internal processing mechanism can work. One way that input is made comprehensive, according to Long (1983), is by 'here –and-now' orientation which enables learners to make an immediate use of the linguistic and extra-linguistic data and his general knowledge to interpret language which he does not actually know. Another way is through an intensive interaction process. Ellis (1984) suggests that a high quantity of input directed at the learners, through independent control of the context by the learner, the learner's perceived need to communicate, exposure to high quality directives, extended utterances (e.g. requests for clarification and confirmation) and opportunities for uninhibited practice, are likely to facilitate rapid language learning.
5. Learners' language learning strategies should also be recognised by teachers and language planners. These include: pattern memorization and imitation, creative construction, hypothesis formation, simplification of input data, inference, transfer, automatised process and analyticity. Each of these will be briefly described below:
  - a). Pattern memorization and imitation: These are behavioural strategies in which the learner imitates and memorizes patterns which occur very frequently and are linked to a communicative function. Deliberate and methodical copying and memorization of whole utterance dictated in the form of notes is a response to this strategy.
  - b). Creative construction: This is a Chomskian sense of learning strategy. It is the way in which the L2 learner produces entirely novel sentences by acquiring finite rules of the language. Dulay, et al (1982:276) define creative construction as a subconscious process by which language learners gradually



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- organize the language they hear, according to the rules they construct in order to understand and generate sentences.
- c). Hypothesis testing: The arts of a learner testing out the language rule he or she has formed by using his prior linguistic knowledge (such as his first language, existing L2 knowledge or knowledge of other languages), by inducing new rules from the input data or by a combination of the two (Faerch and Kasper, 1983b)
  - d). Simplification of input data: This is primarily done by the strategies of assimilation (i.e. attempting to reduce the learning burden, Richards, 1974). Other ways simplification is carried out are through overgeneralization (extending the use of existing knowledge to new inter-language forms, as in *stay-stayed* extended to *go-goed*, regularizing and redundancy reducing (see Selinker, 1972; Widdowson, 1975b; Taylor, 1975; and McLaughlin, 1978a).
  - e). Inferencing: This refers to forming hypotheses about the second language by attending to specific features in the input or using the context of the situation to interpret the input. For example, forming a hypothesis about tense by attending to specific features of the past tense verb: its (-d) (-t) and (-n) forms.
  - f). Transfer: This is the learning strategy developed by proponents of the contrastive analysis hypothesis (Lado, 1957 and Stockwell and Bowen, 1965). It is a process of using the knowledge of the first language in the learning of a second language. Transfer can be positive or facilitative when the first language pattern is identical with the target language pattern and negative when the first language pattern is different from the target language pattern. A lot of criticisms have been levelled against the contrastive analysis hypothesis. First, there are now doubts regarding contrastive analysis predicting errors; there are also criticisms regarding the feasibility of comparing languages and the practical worth of Contrastive Analysis for language teachers, especially in a multilingual classroom setting. The idea of errors being a destructive phenomenon has also been questioned. What is regarded as an error by the contrastive analysts has been interpreted as inter-language systems by people like Selinker (1972), approximate systems by Nemser (1971) , and idiosyncratic dialects by Corder (1971), that is, the structured system or in-built syllabus which the learner constructs at a given stage in his language development . Selinker (1972) suggested five principal processes operating in the interlanguage system: language transfer, over-generalization of target rules, transfer of training (ie a rule entering the learners system through training or instruction), strategies of L2 learning (an identifiable approach by the leaner to the material to be learnt) and strategies of communication (an identifiable approach by the learner to communicate with native speakers).

Selinker (1972) noted that many L2 learners (as many as 95%) fail to reach target language competency, the end of the interlanguage continuum. They stop learning



when they feel they have acquired enough roles to perform the specified target language task. He refers to this phenomenon as fossilization.

- g). **Authomatisation Process:** This involves learning to the point of complete internalisation and automates production without conscious efforts. Fearch and Kasper (1983b) suggest that this can be brought about by practising the L2 productively, through intensive language use and receptively (stored and not used knowledge) and as well as by communicative endeavour (wanting to communicate in L2 by all means at all times).
  - h). **Analyticity:** The capacity of the learners to observe, select and put together unanalysed language forms and functions on his own without the aid of a syllabus (Wilkins, 1976 and 1983). The analytical approach to language teaching can be challenging and illuminating, if used at the appropriate time.
6. Formal instruction has an important role to play in language learning. It enables the learners to focus on the linguistic forms and function; it raises the learners' conscious awareness of the target language; and can increase the rate at which language acquisition takes place. It can also facilitate success in reaching the required proficiency level (Long, 1984 and Ellis, 1985).

These contributions are necessary in order to give the English and communication skills programme strong sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic backing. For, if the course is ever going to be effective, emphasis should not be on linguistic theories alone; it should also derive its strength from sound second language learning theories.

Many tend to neglect the importance of administrative decision in course design. Yet, in a country like Nigeria where these decisions have such an immense influence on the success or failure of a course, their neglect can be disastrous.

In the hierarchy are council of the institution, followed by senate, academic boards under the chairmanship of Vice Chancellor and his deputies, colleges, schools and institutes, faculties (headed by deans and directors), departments (with their respective heads), lecturers (tutors, teachers etc) and students. In a highly bureaucratic structure of this nature, it is often difficult for a classroom teacher to make any remarkable change in the academic structure related to his subjects. In most cases, decisions related to his subject are taken for him by those at the top with little or no consultation with him. Even when he is consulted, his suggestions may not be taken seriously. Students are allowed hardly any say in the decision making process related to their academic career in this administrative structure.

It is against this background that an attempt is to be made in this paper to discuss the administrative considerations that should be given to issues like the language policy of higher education, the status that should be given to the English

and Communication skills course, recruitment policy, budgeting and the overall perception which an institution should have about the programme. The suggestions made in the paper are expected to serve many purposes; they should assist those within the administrative set-up who are charged with the responsibility of designing, re-designing or reviewing the communication skills programme in their decision making process. The suggestions could also be useful for the classroom teacher who, from time to time, is expected to negotiate with the administration on some of the crucial issues raised. If for no other reason, it is an awareness-raising venture. For example, decisions regarding the number of hours for practical, the duration of convention programme, the time needed for training in each skill, modular stages, and the entry points of students of various proficiency levels are hardly taken, simply because these are not considered relevant to the planning of the course.

### **Allocation of Time, Space and Finance**

While we are not supposed to equate the Nigerian programme with those of Britain and America, there is still quite a lot to learn from those in terms of the way they budget for time, space and money in their pre-session and in-session English language course.

Students are not placed according to proficiency levels; language classes are restricted to an average of two hours per each week (the exception being institutions like the Federal University of Minna, which give up to four hours per week to language study) and a total of 80 hours per year. If the British universities can devote so many hours to English in an English environment, 80 hours in Nigeria (and in deed, Ahmadu Bello University,) is a ridiculous underestimation of the language needs of students. In fact, Afolayan (1984:47-48) has advocated a Use of English programme that spreads over three years. The first year, most intensive, should not be less than six units, three for each semester, and should attempt to cover the general part of the overall course. The second year should not be less than four units, two for each semester, and should deal with the specific requirements of each particular discipline. The third year programme should be two units, one unit for each semester. This should be a general application course, linked to the guidance and supervision of the writing of student's projects. No doubt, this is a more realistic programme than the ones we are presently pursuing to the detriment of the students.

#### **1. Space**

This is an area where budgeting is necessary prior to the course. The following searching questions could assist in the decision making process related to space allocation.

- Which classrooms are available for the course?
- When are these classrooms free?

- 
- Are the rooms scattered all over the campus or in one place; what implications does this have for course effectiveness?
  - Can the teaching take place in factories, workshops or laboratories for effectiveness?
  - How many classes are needed if an appreciable students-teacher ratio is to be met?
  - What are the conditions of the classrooms; are there enough chairs, tables, etc; are they spacious enough for the kinds of activities taking place in the English and Communication Skills class?
  - Are provisions for space made for specialist training in speech reading and self-directed learning?
  - Is there enough office space for teachers and are these spaces desirable for consultation on an individual basis?
  - Is there enough administrative office space for record keeping and for progressive and constant production of new research and appropriate teaching-learning materials?
  - Is there enough space for junior and senior administrative staff, storage facilities, work rooms for production of materials, and so on?
  - How can the conflict between the academic departments and service-English unit over space be resolved?

Perhaps budgeting for space is one of the most difficult tasks in any service programme. There is always conflict between the subject departments and the servicing unit. Usually, the subject departments want to choose first and choose the best. It is often the remnants that are left for the servicing unit. Judging from all the arguments so far, this should not be so. English and Communication Skills course needs strong administrative backing which will enforce academic departments to serve it first. The principle should be others first and self last. A principle that will be difficult to implement without strong administrative support.

## **2. Finance**

This is perhaps the most important administrative decision which must precede the English and Communication Skills programme. It is a decision that is readily recognised but hardly ever considered seriously when planning the course. In most cases, the administration has very little knowledge of what is involved in running English and Communication Skills programme successfully. Added to this is the fact that Ahmadu Bello University is over-stretched financially and is thus very critical and sceptical of any innovation or restructuring of the course that requires additional cost. The following administrative decisions are worth taking into account in respect of financing the entire programme:

- What proportion of money will be spent on English and Communication Skills compared to other academic subjects?

- In financial allocations, should English and Communication Skills be considered as just one academic subject, or a multiplicity of subject areas integrated into one?
- Should English and Communication Skills be rated the same as subjects like History, Philosophy, Sociology, etc with no practical, or should it be considered as a skill-oriented subject that must integrate theory and practice into a unified whole?
- Are provisions made for the following resources in financial decisions related to the subject: Language laboratory, resource materials such as journals, textbooks for students, books for teachers, self-access units, audio, video and computer teaching facilities, etc?
- Are there adequate financial provisions for different cadres of staff needed in the unit: course director(s), research course writers, regular teaching staff, senior and junior administrative staff, clerical staff, part-time teaching staff, and so on?
- On what basis are financial judgements made; the number of students being serviced: the man-hours used in servicing the students: the various tasks involved (e.g. theoretical and practical training sessions, project and skill training): or on the basis of English and Communication Skills as a subject like any other non-practical academic subjects?

A look at the tables 1 – 4 will assist the administration in taking the required decisions as well as providing answers to the above questions:

Table 1: 2001 - 2002 Session

| S/N | Faculty              | Total Enrol-ment | Total Pass | %     | Total Fail | %     | No. of Teachers per Faculty | Teacher Student Ratio |
|-----|----------------------|------------------|------------|-------|------------|-------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1   | Arts                 | 560              | 357        | 63.75 | 203        | 36.25 | 4                           | 1:140                 |
| 2   | Administration       | 1278             | 716        | 56.03 | 562        | 43.97 | 4                           | 1:320                 |
| 3   | Agriculture          | 175              | 125        | 71.4  | 50         | 28.6  | 1                           | 1:175                 |
| 4   | Education            | 448              | 177        | 39.51 | 271        | 60.49 | 2                           | 1:224                 |
| 5   | Engineering          | 657              | 537        | 81.74 | 120        | 18.26 | 2                           | 1:329                 |
| 6   | Environmental Design | 515              | 237        | 46.02 | 278        | 52.0  | 2                           | 1:258                 |
| 7   | Law                  | 360              | 233        | 64.72 | 127        | 35.28 | 1                           | 1:360                 |
| 8   | Medicine             | 360              | 286        | 79.44 | 74         | 20.56 | 1                           | 1:360                 |
| 9   | Pharmacy             | 208              | 180        | 86.54 | 28         | 13.46 | 1                           | 1:208                 |
| 10  | Science              | 878              | 403        | 45.90 | 475        | 54.10 | 4                           | 1:220                 |
| 11  | Social Science       | 1773             | 682        | 38.47 | 1091       | 61.53 | 6                           | 1:296                 |
| 12  | Vet. Medicine        | 149              | 85         | 57.05 | 64         | 42.95 | 1                           | 1:149                 |

Source: GENS 103 Coordinating Office, Department of English & Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Table 2: 2002 - 2003 Session

| S/N | Faculty              | Total Enrolment | Total Pass | %     | Total Fail | %     | No. of Teachers per Faculty | Teacher - Student Ratio |
|-----|----------------------|-----------------|------------|-------|------------|-------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1   | Arts                 | 837             | 653        | 78.02 | 184        | 21.98 | 2                           | 1:419                   |
| 2   | Administration       | 1733            | 1127       | 65.03 | 606        | 34.97 | 6                           | 1:289                   |
| 3   | Agriculture          | 146             | 100        | 68.49 | 46         | 31.51 | 2                           | 1:73                    |
| 4   | Education            | 571             | 435        | 76.18 | 136        | 23.82 | 2                           | 1:286                   |
| 5   | Engineering          | 706             | 558        | 79.14 | 148        | 20.86 | 2                           | 1:353                   |
| 6   | Environmental Design | 517             | 398        | 76.98 | 119        | 23.02 | 2                           | 1:129                   |
| 7   | Law                  | 368             | 296        | 80.43 | 72         | 19.57 | 1                           | 1:368                   |
| 8   | Medicine             | 347             | 275        | 79.25 | 72         | 20.75 | 1                           | 1:347                   |
| 9   | Pharmacy             | 211             | 179        | 84.83 | 32         | 15.17 | 1                           | 1:211                   |
| 10  | Science              | 975             | 459        | 47.08 | 516        | 52.92 | 6                           | 1:163                   |
| 11  | Social Science       | 1984            | 1177       | 59.32 | 807        | 40.68 | 6                           | 1:331                   |
| 12  | Vet. Medicine        | 189             | 179        | 94.71 | 10         | 5.29  | 1                           | 1:189                   |

Source: GENS 103 Coordinating Office, Department of English & Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Table 3: 2003 - 2004 Session

| S/N | Faculty              | Total Enrolment | Total Pass | %    | Total Fail | %    | No. of Teachers per Faculty | Teacher Student Ratio |
|-----|----------------------|-----------------|------------|------|------------|------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1   | Arts                 | 1061            | 673        | 63.4 | 388        | 36.6 | 3                           | 1:354                 |
| 2   | Administration       | 2406            | 2062       | 85.7 | 433        | 14.3 | 4                           | 1:602                 |
| 3   | Agriculture          | 149             | 110        | 73.8 | 39         | 26.2 | 2                           | 1:75                  |
| 4   | Education            | 573             | 450        | 78.5 | 123        | 21.5 | 2                           | 1:287                 |
| 5   | Engineering          | 1083            | 684        | 63.2 | 399        | 36.8 | 3                           | 1:361                 |
| 6   | Environmental Design | 535             | 412        | 77.0 | 123        | 23.0 | 3                           | 1:78                  |
| 7   | Law                  | 683             | 581        | 85.1 | 102        | 14.9 | 3                           | 1:228                 |
| 8   | Medicine             | 739             | 575        | 77.8 | 164        | 22.2 | 2                           | 1:34                  |
| 9   | Pharmacy             | 264             | 232        | 87.9 | 32         | 12.1 | 2                           | 1:66                  |
| 10  | Science              | 1310            | 1085       | 82.8 | 225        | 17.2 | 3                           | 1:437                 |
| 11  | Social Science       | 2184            | 1306       | 59.8 | 878        | 40.2 | 5                           | 1:437                 |
| 12  | Vet. Medicine        | 132             | 121        | 91.7 | 11         | 8.3  | 2                           | 1:66                  |

Source: GENS 103 Coordinating Office, Department of English & Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Table 4: 2005 - 2006 Session

| S/N | Faculty              | Total Enrolment | Total Pass | %    | Total Fail | %    | No. of Teachers per Faculty | Teacher Student Ratio |
|-----|----------------------|-----------------|------------|------|------------|------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1   | Arts                 | 669             | 293        | 43.8 | 376        | 56.2 | 3                           | 1:223                 |
| 2   | Administration       | 1,034           | 788        | 76.2 | 447        | 23.8 | 5                           | 1:207                 |
| 3   | Agriculture          | 81              | 77         | 95.1 | 4          | 4.9  | 1                           | 1:81                  |
| 4   | Education            | 471             | 425        | 90.2 | 46         | 9.8  | 2                           | 1:236                 |
| 5   | Engineering          | 748             | 471        | 62.9 | 277        | 37.0 | 3                           | 1:249                 |
| 6   | Environmental Design | 230             | 197        | 85.7 | 33         | 14.3 | 2                           | 1:115                 |
| 7   | Law                  | 327             | 229        | 70.0 | 100        | 30.0 | 2                           | 1:164                 |
| 8   | Medicine             | 458             | 377        | 82.3 | 81         | 17.7 | 2                           | 1:229                 |
| 9   | Pharmacy             | 161             | 127        | 78.9 | 34         | 21.1 | 1                           | 1:161                 |
| 10  | Science              | 1,284           | 1,204      | 93.8 | 80         | 6.2  | 4                           | 1:321                 |
| 11  | Social Science       | 1,357           | 1,215      | 89.5 | 275        | 10.5 | 4                           | 1:339                 |
| 12  | Vet. Medicine        | 102             | 98         | 96.1 | 4          | 3.9  | 1                           | 1:102                 |

Source: GENS 103 Coordinating Office, Department of English & Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Explanation of tables 1 - 4

Pass includes those who scored 40% and above

Fail includes 3 categories of students:

- (a) Those who scored less than 40%
- (b) Those who registered, but were absent in the examinations
- (c) Those who have examination score and No CA. score and vice versa

Experience has shown that there is not yet any clear-cut criterion for financial decisions. Institutions still treat the course the way they like: some feel only left-over should go to the course; some give it the priority it deserves within financial limits; and some institutions rate the course like any other non-practical subject rather than as a multiplicity of courses integrated into one. Instead of giving the course a global allocation which is not based on any rational criteria, costs should be computed on the basis of the number of students that are being serviced, the non-hours being invested in servicing, the resources (both human and material) needed, and the fact that the course is more practically oriented than theoretical. Indeed, it takes more than time, efforts and resources to train a student to master one skill and to accumulate a set of theoretical facts. Money to be spent is best computed using the same criteria used for costing other skill-oriented, practical-intensive courses like Engineering, Medicine, or Agriculture, plus an added cost



arising from the fact that more students are involved in English and Communication Skills than these other courses.

### **Overall Perception**

So far in this paper, a lot has been said about the vital administrative decisions that must be taken before an effective English and Communication Skills programme is a reality in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Central to taking these essential decisions is having the right type of perception of the course. It is only when administrators have the right perception of the course that they can rationally think of the right proportion of time, space, money and resources that should be devoted to the programme.

At the moment, three types of people with three types of perception are handling the running of the course. The first are those who are almost completely ignorant of the aims and objectives of the course. It is the duty of the enlightened teacher to use whatever means are at his disposal to educate such people. The second group is more dangerous to the sources of the course: they understand the aims and objectives of the course as well as its importance, but deliberately cultivate a nonchalant attitude towards its growth and survival. Negotiation with such administrators should be constant and intensive. The teacher needs tactics to change their perception. This is not always an easy task. The last group (few as they are) are those who fully understand and are totally committed to the growth and survival of the course. They are not only ready to build it up but to strengthen it. They are ready to give equal attention to the subject as they give to the other academic subjects in terms of time, space and financial allocation. They serve it first before all other courses being run in the institution. Indeed, this is the type of perception the programme needs to be effective. It is the perception the administrators of the course should strive for.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The attention in this paper has been focussed on the administrative decisions that should be taken in relation to the planning and execution of the English and Communication Skills programme. For the programme to be effective, there must be a standardised language policy, the status accorded the course must be high, and the recruitment policy should foster the use of specially trained teachers for the programme. Concerning time allocation, space and finance two principles must be followed strictly: first, is the principle of equal attention given to English and Communication Skills as to all the other academic subjects. Second, is the principle of serving the programme first where facilities are commonly shared with other academic departments. With strong administrative support from the institution, all these decisions are possible. But this support will not come unless the right perception of the course is there in the minds of the administrators.

Although the English and Communication Skills programme has grown in size, in that many Nigerian universities, colleges and polytechnics have embraced the idea, it has refused to grow in quality. What we see in the programme is

quantity, not quality: it has not been influenced to any great extent by current linguistic thinking, new pedagogical approaches, communicative perspectives on language and the design of specific purpose course. It is still more or less based on an outdated concept of language learning, discrete skill-by-skill teaching, multi-purpose language materials, as well as general language course for learners of mixed abilities, diverse career specialities and achievement levels.

If the goal of a development-oriented English programme is ever going to be achieved in Ahmadu Bello University (and in deed, Nigeria), there is the need to re-order our teaching strategies and priorities. This is more so now that the new National Policy on Education (i.e. the 6.3.3.4 system) and the enormous and unprecedented expansion in scientific and technological activity, make high proficiency in the language of great importance for students. Without high proficiency, they will be unable to progress far, irrespective of competence in their particular fields. No longer will the demands of education be satisfied with mere memorisation and regurgitation of accumulated facts as was the case with the old education system. Progress in the teaching and learning of English should not be accidental. It is a necessity.

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## **35. The Relevance of Grammatical Theories to English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in a Second Language Environment**

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As is commonly believed among linguists and language teaching experts, the various theoretical assumptions that underlie any living language are the bedrock of any grammar teachings, and one's method or attitudes towards a language will be greatly influenced by the kind of theoretical assumptions about that language that one subscribes to. The teaching of English, as a course or a service subject in the Nigerian higher institutions, most especially, in the university is with a lot of challenges to the language teachers and researchers. This is because there are very many theoretical frameworks from which the language can be taught, or through which different linguistic researches can be best conducted. This paper discusses these frameworks with particular emphasis on their strengths and weaknesses and relevance in the teaching of English for academic purposes in a second language environment like Nigeria. From traditional grammar through structural grammar, transformational generative grammar and its latest versions like minimalism to systemic functional grammar, the paper discusses a set of properly argued ideas or principles to explain the descriptive statements about the systemic interrelationships of structures within a particular language – in this case English. The paper concludes by identifying one of these frameworks as the most suitable to the presentation of English for academic purposes in the typical second language environment.

### **1. Introduction**

Grammar theories are a set of properly argued ideas or principles to explain the descriptive statements about the systemic interrelationships of structures within a particular language. This paper discusses these theories with emphasis on their strengths and weaknesses with a view to bringing out their relevance to the teaching of English for academic purpose (EAP) in a second language environment. In other words, we are talking of different organized principles by which we make a sense of grammar of English for the express purpose of teaching the language skills and usages at different levels of education in a second language environment.

By EAP we are referring to English that is taught for various English examinations in schools, especially the English language subject in the high schools and English language courses in the universities. EAP is a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and ESP according to Robinson (1991:1) "is an enterprise involving education, training and practice, and drawing upon three major realms of knowledge: language, pedagogy and the students'/ participants'



specialist areas of interest.' In fact, EAP is sometimes cynically referred to as English for the exam. Apart from this meaning, EAP is also applied in a narrower sense to describe various academic courses in English being run by some institutions (especially in native speakers' environments) to equip people who may be willing to increase their knowledge of English for certain purposes, such as occupational or academic.

English is learnt and used in Nigeria as a second language owing to the fact of its origin and development in the country. The contents of any EAP are essentially the same when adequate provision has been made to accommodate environmental peculiarities and individual specialist areas of interest. It is this twin distinction of Nigerian peculiarities and what specific roles English is expected to perform in a typical Nigerian situation that has necessitated the thesis of this paper. The grammatical theories we will discuss in this paper are the time-tested Traditional Grammar, Structural Grammar, the Neo-Firthian/Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, and Chomskyan's Transformational Generative Grammars. Our attempt in this paper is not to present a detailed essay on the theories but rather to present a kind of synoptic analysis with particular reference to their contribution and relevance to the presentation of English for academic purposes in the Nigerian ESL environment.

## **2. Traditional Grammar**

Traditional grammar is a label applied loosely to the entire body of grammatical description in Europe and America during the whole period before the rise of modern linguistics in the twentieth century, but particularly to the descriptions presented in schools textbooks in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The term is often used with clear pejorative connotations, reflecting the sometimes inadequate nature of traditional descriptions and the overtly prescriptivist orientation of the school text, but it should not be forgotten that traditional grammar represents the fruits of more than two thousand years of serious grammatical investigation, or that many of the categories and analysis of traditional grammar have been incorporated with only minor modifications into current theories of grammar (Trask, 1995).

Traditional grammar is a cover name for the collection of concepts and ideas about the structure of language that western societies have received from ancient Greek and Roman sources. The term is used to distinguish these ideas from those of contemporary linguistics, which are intended to apply to a much broader range of languages, and to correct a number of inadequacies in traditional grammar.

Traditional grammar attempts, usually within a single language, to analyse the constituents of any given well-formed sentence. The focus of attention is on surface structure, not meaning. Perhaps the most fundamental contribution of traditional grammar to EAP is that it gives learners a basic understanding of the building blocks of language, which has helped in improving the writing skills of the pupils especially at the lower levels of education. There are many characteristics relating to procedural approaches, which were found to be common

with most grammar texts produced in the era of traditional grammar (Osisanwo, 2002). The most essential ones among them are discussed hereunder.

### 2.1 Reliance on Latin

Traditional grammar followed the classical patterning of parts of speech and accidents, thus compressing English grammar into classical moulds. No comprehensive theory was formulated to direct the description, even the prescription of grammatical rules. We can illustrate this with the mood system in English which has two options of *indicative* and *imperative*, but which traditional grammarians described as having three, thus imposing the *subjunctive* mood of Latin on English. But this Latinate mood had almost been abandoned in modern English usage, though its use in French is still very much alive. Examples of this mood abound in old English such as in Elizabethan age, poetry and in fanciful oratory, e.g.

Were it not for imagination, sir, a man would be as happy in the arms of a Chambermaid as of a duchess.

Were I worthier of your love I could be better content to toil and toil on its behalf.

If I were given wings I should fly away.

It is needless to say that the subjunctive mood is not useful for academic purposes.

The inadequacies in imposition of Latin patterning on English Grammar are also evident in the case system, descriptions of tenses, parts of speech, and collocational rules. According to Tomori (2004), one of such collocational rules is that the infinitive should never be split as for instance

They are enjoined *to promptly decide* as soon as possible.

### 2.2 Notional Definition

A major inadequacy with traditional grammar is the provision of definitions that are highly notional or subjective. For instance, Lowth (1763: 21) defined a noun as “the name of anything conceived to subsist, or of which we have any notion.” This definition is not appropriate for English for academic purpose since insights from modern grammar have made it so imprecise and difficult to apply consistently in linguistic investigation. For example in *a blue tie*, *blue* as the name of a colour should have been classified as a noun as a consistent application of the definition would have required. In defining a verb, Cobbett (1868: 24 – 5) says a “verb is used to express the actions, the movement and the state or manner of being, of all creatures and things, whether animate or inanimate. *To fight* is an action; *to reflect* is a movement, *to sit* is a state of being”. It is quite clear that Cobbett did not give accurate guidance on how to recognize the verb in:

*John is asleep.*

The word that shows the proper “state of being” in the sentence is *asleep* and it is not a verb (Tomori, 2004). It is an adverb or and adjective. A noun is better defined for academic purpose as *a word that is used to name or identify any of a class of things, people, places or ideas*. While a verb can be conceived as *a word or phrase that indicates an action, event or state*.

### 2.3. Prescriptive Approach

One of the major goals of traditional grammarians was to set up rules of correct usage of grammar. As a result of this, the kind of grammar written by them was highly prescriptive and is not useful for academic purpose in an ESL situation. Some of the rules are:

- (a.) We cannot have the comparative and superlative degrees of certain adjectives like *perfect*. But we know that it is perfectly okay to refer to God as the “most perfect being.”
- (b.) The object form of ‘who’ should be different from its subject form. E.g.
  - (i.) This is the boy *who(m)* you saw – Object
  - (ii.) This is the boy *who* came here – Subject

For the first sentence the object of *who* should be *whom* as opposed to *who* as prescribed by the traditional grammar.

- (c.) The use of double negation is proscribed. But in English for academic purpose, especially in some varieties of English, double negatives could serve as a way of reiterating the negation, e.g.:

It is *not* common to find *nobody* in the lecture room.

### 2.4. Reliance on Logic

Traditional grammarians relied on logic in their prescriptive efforts. For instance, Cobbett (1868: 103) prescribed that the response to the question, “who broke the glass?” should be, “it was I,” and not “it was me.” However, if there is a question which does not show that someone did something, it is answered with the objective case. E.g.

- A: Who is at the door?
- B: It’s *me*.

If in the question, action is implied, it is answered with the subjective case as in

- C: Who untied the colt?
- D: It was *I*.

In the same way it was considered illogical to end a sentence with a preposition as in:

An argument is not something to end a day *with*

This usage is however correct and acceptable in modern grammar. It is equally appropriate for English for academic purpose.

It was also illogical in traditional grammar to use the word *it* in the sentence below because the word does not agree grammatically with either *dews* or *showers*.

It is the dewes and showers that make the grass grow.

However, the use of *it* in the sentence is grammatical and acceptable. To substitute *it* for *they* will be an over-application of the concord rule, and the sentence will be incongruous and unacceptable as would please the traditional grammarians.

### 2.5 Primacy of the written word

Traditional grammar gave the pride of life to the written word. There were two angles to this approach. First, little or no attention was paid to grammar of spoken English. Second, word formation was attended to, to the utter neglect of the syntactic roles of words. English grammar for academic purpose must be based on both the written and spoken form, and there must be rigorous analysis of word formation as well the syntactic roles of words for pedagogic purpose.

In summary, Allen and Widdowson (1975) said that traditional grammar was based largely on intuitions about grammatical meaning, and was too atomistic and not backed by an overall theory or model of grammar, for over-emphasizing detail at the expense of attention to large patterns, and for being internally inconsistent yet prescriptive or normative in nature, ignoring or classing as ungrammatical actual linguistic usage in favour of prescriptive rules derived largely from Latin and Greek and the linguistic categories appropriate to these languages.

### 3. Traditional Grammar and EAP

The contribution or relevance of traditional grammar to English for academic purposes in a second language environment like Nigeria started with Protogoras, an influential 5<sup>th</sup> century Sophist who was credited with the distinction of three genders (masculine, feminine, neuter) in Greek. These gender names have since been used and retained in the teaching and learning of English up till date. Plato who questioned the divine origin of language and speculated on what possible relationship there could be between words and meanings concluded that a given word bears an inherent natural and; therefore, logical relationship to the concept named (referential theory). He established two words classes, *Onoma* and *rhema* equivalent to nouns and verbs; the two word classes still dominate the English sentence structure upon which most school grammars are based till today. As

defined by Plato, '*nouns* were terms which could function in sentences as the subjects of a predication, and *verbs* were terms which could express the action or quality predicated' (Lyons 1968:10-11). The relevance of these distinctions to the modern teaching of English for academic purpose in a second language environment cannot be over-emphasised. These early description of English grammar forms the bedrock of presentation of English to speakers of other languages apart from English.

Aristotle, another Greek philosopher kept Platonic distinction between nouns and verbs and added a third class of words, *syndesmoi* equivalent to conjunctions. He defined conjunctions as words that were not nouns or verbs. He retained Protogoras' classification of gender and introduced a new term, *intermediate* to refer to the third gender known as neuter. The most significant contribution of his work to the study of English in a second language environment was in the area of tense introduced into Greek verbs. Tense, up till today, is given prominence in the teaching and learning of English in schools. Aristotle further noted certain structural features in words such as 'case' in nouns. He later defined *the word* as the smallest meaningful unit and developed a system of natural logic that was applied to the study of language.

The Stoics who gave the most attention to language did not take grammar to be a direct inflection of language. They insisted on the lack of correspondence between words and things and on the illogicalities of language. The early Stoics distinguished four parts of speech: *nouns*, *verbs*, *conjunctions* and *articles*. The latter Stoics sub-divided the noun class into proper and common nouns. They established five cases in nouns, *nominative*, *accusative*, *dative*, *blative* and *genitive*. These cases are very relevant to the study of English nowadays. They complemented their works by distinguishing between active and passive, and between transitive and intransitive verbs. The Stoics studied agreement in verbs and came to the conclusion that the outer forms of language reveal inner truths about human nature. This originated the distinction between deep and surface structures later developed in transformational generative grammar and systemic linguistics.

According to Lyons (1968: 12) the Alexandrian scholars carried further the work of the Stoic grammarians. And it was in Alexandria that what we now call the 'traditional' grammar of Greek was more or less definitively codified. It was at this time that the Dionysius Thrax – the most comprehensive and systematic grammatical description was published. In this description, the *adverb* and the *participle* were to the four stoic parts of speech. It could be said today that without these classifications by the traditional grammarians, presentation of English for academic purpose will be difficult, particularly in the second language environment.

#### 4. The Development of Modern Grammatical Theories

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857 – 1913) was the father of the modern approach to the study of grammar. Before him, linguistics was part of philology. The philological

tradition focused on classical languages and canonical texts and was often prescriptive. Saussure made a distinction between prescriptive and descriptive linguistics. To him, prescriptive linguistics seeks to develop, systematize and enforce a language standard while descriptive linguistics treats language as a symbolic system through which people communicate. It seeks to describe the systems that actually exist rather than to correct them. Therefore, language under modern linguistics must be studied in line with these major aspects or procedures: observation, formulation of hypothesis, experimentation and formulation of law. Analysis of language as reviewed by Saussure should concern itself with verifiable facts, and at the same time look into language as a whole. Since it is science-oriented, there must be consistency; that is, statements about language should be consistent; no part should contradict the other.

Modern linguistics provides description to all significant levels of analysis rather than prescription. Saussure's model describes the nature of the various components of a language and how they are patterned to produce meaningful speech. Unlike in traditional grammar, the data used for description could be spoken or the written manifestation of language. Such linguistic description, also known as text, is carried out at three levels of substance, form and context. The level of substance, according to Tomori, is at which the physical manifestation of language is displayed. Phonic and graphic are substances of speech and written languages respectively. Phonic substance is studied in phonology and graphic substance is studied in orthography.

The level of form deals with the organization of the phonic or graphic substance into patterns that convey meaning. Form incorporates both grammar and lexis and grammar is the level of form at which finite set of rules operates to produce sentences that are well formed in any language. The level of context centers around non-linguistic situation of everyday life in which the form is used.

Modern linguistics lays emphasis on synchronic study of a language rather than diachronic study which traditional grammar purely focused. Saussure and his students believe that historical considerations are irrelevant to the investigation of particular temporal 'states' of a language. According to them, the change from diachronic study is necessary since throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, scholars were concerned with explaining or accounting for the historical development of a particular language.

The interest of modern linguistics in synchronic study of language generally has contributed a lot to the study of English in a second language environment. This has motivated learners of English to try and attain a certain level of competence in the use of the language for today's competitive world. Both the knowledge of description and the study of the structure of language at different levels, which learners in a second language environment might have gained in modern linguistics, will empower them to analyze utterances in English easily without reference to logic, philosophy and metaphysics.



#### 4.1 Contributions of the Modern Grammatical Theories to EAP in a Second Language Environment

By modern grammatical theories we are referring to most of the post-classical attempts at describing the grammar of language, from structural grammar, Neo-Firthian or Halliday's systemic functional linguistics to Chomsky's transformational generative grammar and its later forms such as government and binding and the minimalist programme. There is a common thread that binds all of these theories together: their departure from the diachronic study of language and jettisoning of the prescriptive nature of the traditional grammar. We shall then consider them one after the other.

##### 4.1.1 Structural Grammar

With the demise of Ferdinand de Saussure, his students collated their notes of his lectures and published in 1915 his *Cours de linguistique Generale*. The book, in its French original and English translation, influenced the thinking of many latter-day linguists (Tomori 1977) among whom were Frank Boas, L. Bloomfield and Edward Sapir. The theory is also known as Taxonomic grammar. It came as a result of the interest of American linguists in the hitherto unwritten American and Indian languages. The anthropologist, Edwards Sapir, also contributed to the theory, but it was Bloomfield who made the American theory and practice most explicit.

The main thesis of this theory is that language has structure. Their view of structure is that there were three levels at which the language is studied namely: level of sound (phonology), level of word formation (morphology), and sentence pattern (syntax). The structuralists believe that language is made up of phonemes and morphemes and they are all related. To them, language is supposed to be made of morphemes in sequence and these morphemes are made of phonemes as in 'boys' /boiz/, which comprises three phonemes.

One very significant feature of structural grammar is that it describes grammar rather than prescribe it. The linguistic approach espouses a study of language based on the concept that oral language is the primary form of language. Writing is but a record of spoken language. Structural grammarians consider the whole language including its phonemic system (the sounds of language), its morphological system (the form of words), and its syntactic system (the structure and formation of words in sentences).

Structural grammar tries to be scientific through discovery procedure, that is, using a set of techniques. This is necessary to avoid the notional cocoon in which traditional grammar was wrapped. So the phonemes of the language have to be empirically analyzed. Meanwhile, as the procedure takes place, meaning is completely left out in the whole description of a language. (This was partly a reaction to traditional grammar that was considered to be too meaning-dependent). As far as the morphemes and sentences are concerned, the element in the sentences must be distributed into distributional classes (form classes), which the

traditionalists called the parts of speech. This can be determined through substitution, as in:

|                  |   |       |   |           |
|------------------|---|-------|---|-----------|
| <i>The man</i>   | → | cooks | → | everyday. |
| <i>The woman</i> | → | cooks | → | everyday. |
| <i>The girl</i>  | → | cooks | → | everyday. |

This frame has enabled us to get a set of nouns: *man*, *woman*, *girl*, etc. We can do this for the verb *cooks*, as in:

|         |   |               |   |           |
|---------|---|---------------|---|-----------|
| The man | → | <i>sweeps</i> | → | everyday. |
| The man | → | <i>weeps</i>  | → | everyday. |
| The man | → | <i>jumps</i>  | → | everyday. |

And as well for the adverbials as in

|         |   |        |   |                            |
|---------|---|--------|---|----------------------------|
| The man | → | sweeps | → | <i>everyday</i> .          |
| The man | → | wept   | → | <i>uncontrollably</i> .    |
| The man | → | jumped | → | <i>in that direction</i> . |

On the issue of how to determine the arrangement of these form classes, the logic of structuralism is that in a sentence, one has to have a linear pattern (order) of sentences as in examples below. In each sentence, there are series of slots to fill with appropriate grammatical categories, e.g.:

He ran home.  
Ran he home.

For Bloomfield, grammatical structure consists of morphemes in sequence. This is important because the position of a word within a sentence will definitely determine its function as in

*John* Kicked James.  
James Kicked *John*.

In these sentences, *John* is functioning as subject in the first and object in the second. And this change of position of *John* has brought about a change in its meaning.

The structuralists' attempt to analyze structure led to the issue of Immediate Constituents. A constituent is a word or construction, which enters into a larger construction. Thus, it was argued that a sentence such as

Poor John ran away

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can be split into two:

Poor John / ran away

and that each of these constituents could further be split into

Poor / John // ran / away.

Finally, the structural theory adopts the theory that (1) language is first and foremost spoken while writing is secondary, (2) a marked shift from data proliferation rules to account for each individual item establishing a clear picture of a language as a whole, (3) there is a systematic interrelationship of language elements and (4) a shift from item-centred to structure-view of language.

#### 4.1.2 Structural Grammar and EAP

Structural grammar as earlier stated has helped the learners of English in a second language environment like Nigeria in defining grammatical categories in terms of the distributions and types of inflexions that they can take (substitution in a form, positional classification of words, inflexional classification of words, etc). For examples:

Kola is dancing now.

Dancing is bad now.

Contrary to the notional belief of the traditional grammar, structural grammar has distributed *Dancing* to be a gerundive noun simply because of its function as the subject of the second sentence.

Another important contribution of the theory to the study of English is that learners of English could conveniently describe the structure of the language without reference to universal categories of traditional grammar. Also the logic of structuralism which says sentences must have a linear pattern has helped learners in forming and using correct structures of English sentences as in

Olu and Jide went to the market.

Not

\*Olu and went to the market Jide.

In a second language learning of English, learners can embark on scientific method through discovery procedure contrary to traditional belief of vague notion in analyzing phonemes of English. This is widely done in all schools where English is studied. Learners can now segment the phonemes, then to morphemes and to their meanings.

The Immediate Constituent analysis generated by the structuralists has assisted learners of English in a second language environment a lot since the learners can use it to avoid semantic problems. That is, they don't need to know the meaning before cutting the sentence. This immediate constituent analysis is more useful because it enables the learners to know the function of the element in relation to the other elements constituting the structure.

However, Structural grammar failed to incorporate semantics as a level of description. Meaning was completely left out in the formal description of the language. This is contrary to the belief that the ultimate objective of the description of any level of language is to arrive at the meaning of that structure. This does not help the learners much if compared to what they are to be equipped with under transformational generative grammar or systemic grammar for example.

Finally, its approach is too shallow as it failed to look at the deep structure which generates the surface structure that it concentrates on. The above, if thoroughly assessed, may lead to production of 'half baked' learners of English as learners may have problems in reading meaning to sentences of English.

#### **4.2 Transformational Generative Grammar**

Transformational grammar is a broad term describing grammars (almost exclusively those of natural languages) that have developed in a Chomskyan tradition. In the early to mid 1960s, Noam Chomsky developed the idea that each sentence in a language has two levels of representation – a deep structure and a surface structure. The deep structure was (more-or-less) a direct representation of the basic semantic relations underlying a sentence, and was mapped onto the surface structure (which followed the phonological form of the sentence very closely) via transformations. Chomsky believed that there would be considerable similarities between the Deep Structures of different languages, and that these structures would reveal properties, common to all languages, which were concealed by their Surface Structures. However, this was perhaps not the central motivation for introducing Deep Structure. Transformations themselves had been proposed prior to the development of Deep Structure, essentially as a means of increasing the mathematical and descriptive power of Context free grammars. Similarly, Deep Structure was devised largely for narrow technical reasons relating to early semantic theory.

Furthermore, Tomori (1977) claims that transformational grammar attempts to describe the innate ability of a native speaker to form and understand sentences in his native language. This ability is what Chomsky refers to as 'competence'. On the other hand, what the native speaker does when he makes utterances on specific occasions is referred to as 'performance'. Thus, without the innate competence, the performance will be impossible. According to Tomori (1977:66),

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It is this underlying competence that transformational grammar seeks to explain. It is an attempt to make explicit that knowledge which is implicit in the native speaker of any language.

Thus, in the above submission, Tomori has described the major preoccupation of all transformational generative grammars.

Perhaps it is necessary to explain the term 'generative' that is often confused with 'transformation' in TGG. A generative grammar is not necessarily a transformational grammar. By Chomsky and his followers the term 'generative' is usually understood to combine two distinguishable senses: 'projective' (or 'predictive'), and 'explicit' ('formal' versus 'informal'). To Tomori (1977: 66) the term 'generate' means to describe instead of to produce. He says:

When it is said that a rule generates a sentence, what this means in transformational grammar is that a particular rule or set of rules describes how the particular linguistic element or string is formed. Because generative grammar is a model of competence and not a model of performance, it is an explicit knowledge of the native speaker: its primary purpose is not to serve as model to guide the performance of anyone using the language.

It should be noted that TGG as formulated by Harris in 1951 has been comprehensively revised by Chomsky in 1957 and 1965 giving rise to what has been commonly referred to as early and later transformational grammar (Tomori 1977). Again, the theory had been extended in *Government and Binding*, a theory of syntax in the tradition of transformational grammar developed by Chomsky (1981, 1982, 1986). This theory is a radical revision of his earlier (1957, 1965) theories and was later revised in *A Minimalist Programme for Linguistic Theory* (1993) and several subsequent papers, the latest being *Derivation by Phase* (2001). Although there is a large literature on government and binding theory, which is not written by Chomsky, Chomsky's papers have been instrumental in setting the research agenda.

The name refers to two central subtheories of the theory: *government*, which is an abstract syntactic relation, and *binding*, which deals with the referents of pronouns, anaphors, and R-expression. GB was the first theory to be based on the principles and parameters model of language, which also underlies the later developments of the Minimalist Programme (Haegeman, 1994).

The Minimalist Programme (MP) is the current model of Chomskyan Transformational Generative Grammar (henceforth TGG) that seeks to eliminate clumsiness and redundancies that have characterized most Chomskyan models of grammatical descriptions. But this model, unlike others before it, is a progression, that is, a programme that is yet to be fully developed. Thus, it is premature, so to say, to refer to MP as a theory. This much was admitted by Chomsky himself in

the interview granted Belliti and Rizzi (2000) 'On Minimalism'. According to him, it is important to

...note that it (that is MP) is not really a theory; it is an approach, a framework that accelerated the search for redundancies that should be eliminated...

In a nutshell, Chomsky summarises his intention in developing minimalism as follows:

That's one reason why people do experiments. They do experiments to try to get rid of irrelevant phenomena: the point of the experiment is to try to throw out most of the phenomena and discover just those that matter...

#### 4.2.1 Transformational Generative Grammar and EAP

From the fundamental assumptions underlying TGG, it is evident that Chomsky's idea of grammar is that it is a device for producing the structure, not of *langue* (that is, not of a particular language), but of competence – the ability to produce and understand sentences in any and all languages. His universalist theories are related to the ideas of those 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century grammarians who urged that grammar be considered a part of logic – the key to analyzing thought. This, however, was part of what was responsible for the rejection of Classical grammar. In the same vein, the claim of the TGG that it attempts to explain the ability of a native speaker to form and understand sentences in his native language, has clearly chartered the course of the theory in relation to its application to English for academic purpose in a second language environment. Tomori (1977:67) observes that,

Because generative grammar is a model of competence and not a model of performance, it is an explicit description of the implicit knowledge of the native speaker: its primary purpose is not to serve as a model to guide the performance of anyone using the language.

It should however be noted that the English for academic purpose in Nigeria is more about language use than language description. Even almost all of the applied linguistic researches in our higher institutions are devoted to exploration of the functions and uses of the English language in relation to the other languages in the country.

In addition, the theory is too mathematical, which may discourage some learners of English in a second language environment. Chomsky, drawing from his background as a scientist, has relied too much on abstract formalization that may be found puzzling not only to second language learners (particularly at the lower level of education) but also to native speakers who may be averse to the



complex symbols used in the theory. Another point is its high degree of abstraction, which has contributed greatly to the complexity of the theory and has made learners of English who may want to use the theory in analyzing language to be more confused since they are not native speakers.

Lastly, transformational generative theory is too theory-conscious. That is, it has pegged down linguistics into the study of the native speaker's language at the expense of the study of second and foreign languages. It has also proved that it is not committed to aiding learners in a second language environment to have an adequate knowledge of functional relevance of the English language.

### **5. Halliday's Systemic Grammar**

Halliday's Systemic-Functional Linguistics is specifically geared to relating structure to communicative function. Halliday, more than any other neo-Firthian scholar, has done much for modern linguistics by explicitly sticking to the neo-Firthian notions of systems and structures, and by being committed to a 'sociological' approach to language (cf. Berry, 1975:22). The Firthian school of thought initiated by Firth dominated the linguistic scene in Britain in the fifties and sixties. According to Firth (1957), the chief duty of linguistics is to explain the meaning of language, which is to be found in the interlinking structures and systems of the levels of phonology, grammar, lexis and situation. The concern of the neo-Firthian approach to actual language use and the aspects of systems and structures further developed by Halliday make the approach specifically relevant to the teaching of English for academic purposes at all levels of education in a second language environment like Nigeria.

Halliday (1985) concentrates exclusively on the functional part of grammar, 'that is, the interpretation of the grammatical patterns in terms of configurations of functions' (Foreword, p. x). However, Halliday's functional grammar defers from the functional grammar developed by Dik (1978), summarized in Dik (1980), and from Kay's (1985) Functional Unification Grammar. All the three types of functional grammar, however, display some influence from the Prague School of linguistics. According to Dik (1980:46),

A language is regarded in the first place as an instrument by means of which people can enter into communicative relations with one other [sic]. From this point of view language is primarily a pragmatic phenomenon – a symbolic instrument used for communicative purposes.

However, while Halliday's functional grammar begins from the premise that language has certain functions for its users as a social group, so that it is primarily socio-linguistic in nature, Dik concentrates on speakers' competence, seeing his grammar as (1980:47) 'a theory of the grammatical component of communicative competence'. Dik shares, in some measure, Chomsky's view of grammar as a part of cognitive psychology. Halliday makes no separation of grammatical and

pragmatic competence; he sees grammar as a meaning potential shared by a language and its speakers.

Systemic-Functional linguistics is considered suitable for the presentation of English for academic purposes in Nigeria because it is both structural and functional. In terms of its structural nature, the model views language as a phenomenon that has a form realized by its grammatical system. In other words, it considers language as a patterned activity that can be analysed in terms of the various units contained in it, and the way these units relate to one another. In this connection, a linguistic expression is not just the additive value of words (or any other unit), but the complex patterning formed by the operation of units within each other (Muir, 1972).

In terms of its functional nature, Systemic-Functional Grammar treats the issue of grammar and meaning simultaneously, and not in isolation, thereby recognizing grammatical meaning as a separate entity. This is very significant for the use of English in Nigeria because the English language is viewed as a phenomenon that performs some acts, in terms of the general understanding of linguistic structure, in relation to some other factors like shared knowledge and concept of situation. According to Berry, another notable systemic linguist, Systemic-Functional Linguistics gives a relatively low priority to psychological aspects of language, unlike Transformational Generative Linguistics. She gives the following questions as being very relevant to Systemic Linguistics:

What are the social functions of language? How does language fulfill these social functions? Systemic linguists consider that the answers to these questions are vitally important ingredients of the answers to the questions: What is language? How does language work? (Berry 1975:23).

The fundamental concept of Systemic Grammar is that of the *system*. Kress (1976:3) describes a 'system' 'as a set of options with an entry condition: that is to say, a set of things of which one must be chosen, together with a statement of the conditions under which the choice is available'. This set of options is the range of formal meaning relations that obtain in the language, in this case English. In addition to the concept of system, Systemic Grammar also describes the patterns of English in terms of three other basic concepts: *Unit*, *Structure* and *Class*. It is within the category of 'Unit' where we have such grammatical categories as (1) the Sentence, (2) the Clause, (3) the Group, (4) the Word, and (5) the Morpheme. The classification of these grammatical categories in systemic linguistics has been very helpful to the presentation of the English for academic purpose at the major levels of education. Second language learners have related well to the categories and their related concepts and this is evident in many studies been carried out in English in Nigerian universities most of which are anchored on the systemic linguistics framework. (Olowe, 1985, Asiyanbola, 2003, Taiwo, 2003, Babalola, 2005).

### **5.1 Systemic Linguistics and EAP**

Systemic linguistics of all the theories discussed up to now is the most appropriate theory for academic purposes in a second language environment. Apart from the fact that it views language as a social phenomenon, its demarcation of the three functions of ideational, interpersonal and textual is very significant to English for academic purpose at all levels of education. This is so because the study of language begins from the functions it performs.

The scale and category of this theory has contributed to the study of English in a second language environment since it provides a framework for the analysis of the language and the description of any stretch of its spoken or written form that has actually occurred. Based on the knowledge of the theory, learners of English have realized that the analysis is not done mainly on books or other printed materials, but equally on more hesitant structure of conversation. The early stage of scale and category of systemic grammar which held that a text could be analyzed at three primary levels of substance, form and situations (context) has contributed to teaching and learning of English in a second language environment since a text is now carried out at the three levels.

The level of substance according to Tomori is that at which the physical manifestation of language is displayed. The level of form deals with the organization of phonic or graphic substance into patterns that convey meaning. The level of situation lies outside the domain of linguistics; it involves an account of all the sociological factors that constitute the circumstances of the text under discussion. This sociological aspect of language is almost left unattended to in other grammatical theories earlier considered. With the aid of systemic or functional grammar, learners of English now know that factors like location, and the tone of texts, previous events related to it, number of participants, their personalities' status, relationship in that particular situation, etc. contribute to how they are to analyze the language.

In addition, the issues of semantics, discourse analysis and pragmatics are all significant parts of the systemic grammar. So also are the stylistics and some aspects of sociolinguistics. In fact, scholars like Fowler (1991), Leckie-Tarry (1995) acknowledged their indebtedness to systemic functional linguistics in their works. According to Leckie-Tarry (1995: 5) the knowledge of the way a language is used

... must be based on an understanding, either implicitly or explicit, of the function a given text has within society; the social and institutional determinations which produce the text; a knowledge of the relationship between texts, both in terms of their social functions and in terms of their linguistic/semiotic similarities and differences.

Systemic grammar, which gives less psychological consideration unlike transformational grammar, has helped learners of English to study the language with less difficulty. Learners of English that are using systemic grammar

knowledge can pick on a language and see how it is used since the grammar itself treats the issue of grammar and meaning together. In addition, systemic linguistics has broader influence than traditional grammar since it is more descriptively rigorous and systematic in its analysis.

In comparison with TGG, it does not discriminate whether the language is native or not; its main concern is how the language is used. Its analysis of grammatical categories is lucid and simple, and it is the theory that is commonly favoured in most contemporary descriptions of English. Systemic grammar uses no complex symbols or complicated rules, but treats the issue of grammar along with meaning in such a way that one complements the other. Again, systemic linguistics, unlike TGG, is well suited to different analysis in linguistic stylistics because of its use to describe actual instances of language use. This has made the teaching and learning of other linguistic courses in the universities easier for both the lecturers and students. Courses like semantics, discourse analysis, pragmatics, and phonetics and phonology have been greatly influenced by insights from systemic linguistics more than other grammatical theories. Even aspects of stylistics, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics can be situated within systemic linguistics.

## **6. Conclusion**

It can be said that the backbone of English linguistics is the various grammatical theories that have evolved over the years to guide the descriptions of languages, most importantly for our concern in this essay, English. These theories have greatly shaped the views of language experts, language teachers and linguists generally on their perception of and attitude to the English language description and teaching. However, there are countless views on language teaching as there are many theories. These theories have been reviewed in this paper to highlight how relevant they are to the presentation of English for academic purpose in a typical second language environment. It has been shown, among other things, that each of the theories is unique and has got both strong and weak points in relation to the teaching of EAP in a second language situation, like Nigeria. But more than the rest, Systemic Functional Linguistics has been identified as the most suitable to the presentation of EAP in a second language environment.

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## **36. Grammatical Errors in the Written English of Level 100 Students of Literature and their Pedagogical Implications**

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A learner of English as a second language is progressively changing his performance to bring it more in line with that of a native speaker. Instability in the characteristics of his language should be expected. However, studies on this aspect have always been in the conventional language class. This paper deviates from this to evaluate both the written English of level 100 students offering Literature in three tertiary institutions in Nigeria along side marking guides and mark allocations for same examinations. The concern is with what should be done to improve the quality of written English of students not only in the conventional English language class, but especially in the literature class. The errors arising from the students' imperfect competence in the target language should be of significance to the language teacher because of the many obvious wider implications. The paper contends that errors can be turned to teaching advantage through classroom activities and development of comprehensive marking guides quite different from what is in vogue.

### **1. Introduction**

The linguist, Ravem (1970:175-185), has observed that it is unrealistic to reckon on language learning without errors as to reckon on human existence without sin. This statement presupposes that in the process of learning and using a language, errors are bound to occur in one form or the other and to varying degrees of frequency. While it has become too common, though painfully so, to ignore errors in the use of English, no teacher of English, be it of the language or literature, can afford to ignore the errors of his students.

This paper takes a fresh look at how to tackle the type of grammatical errors found in the written English of our Literature students. The aim is two-fold. The first emanates from the second. Firstly, there is the urgent need to continue to discuss concrete programmes of action to help improve the communicative effectiveness of our Literature students. The assumption is that there is a relationship between conscious or unconscious mastery of a given language and the use of that language for effective communication. The second aim is to challenge teachers of Literature to begin to consider changing the old method of especially examining or assessing students to assist eliminate or minimise the language errors in the written English of these students.

For the 2005/2006 academic session data was gathered on the type of questions and especially marking guides and mark allocation of Literature courses

taught level 100 Literature students of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State University, Kaduna, and The Federal College of Education, Zaria. The main thrust was to randomly see the performance of these students in the Use of English in their Literature scripts. In addition, the marking guides and mark allocations were scrutinised to see how much of it would assist correct the supposed faulty use of English. This tendency is advised by the continuous emphasis on using Literature to teach English to users of English as a second language and likely implication of the absence of these efforts to correct the linguistically incorrect expressions on pedagogy generally.

## **2. Conceptual Analysis**

It is not easy to determine the grammatical status of an expression in any given language for at least three important reasons. First, the speaker's judgment that certain expressions are unacceptable do not necessarily guarantee that they are ungrammatical since according to Smith and Wilson (1983), "there may be language-independent perceptual principles that make perfectly grammatical sentences seem ungrammatical". Second, the converse is also true, 'judgments that expressions are acceptable do not guarantee that they are grammatical' (Boadi, 1968:23). Third, there are many "expressions for which speakers do not give consistent acceptability judgments" (Bever, 1977:72). Classifying the particular utterance as ungrammatical therefore needs caution. The argument, however, is that certain acceptable sentences are in fact ungrammatical but they are deemed acceptable perhaps by virtue of their perceptual comprehensibility or perhaps because such utterances are often heard or read. Pryse (1984:12) says:

... many people think that they have heard something expressed very often and over a long period of time, it must therefore be correct. This of course is quite untrue and in a great many cases, it is very difficult to persuade students that many expressions they have grown up with over the years are in fact quite incorrect grammars.

Since there are different views on how to determine the grammatical status of an expression, on what bases then can we safely say an utterance is grammatical or ungrammatical? The starting point of course is for us to agree on what grammar is and what it is not so that utterances that do not fall in with our understanding of grammar can then be safely labeled as ungrammatical whether they are acceptable or not.

The word grammar has different shades of meaning for different people depending on educational background and experience. Sometimes the same persons use the word with quite different meanings on different occasions. Boadi (1968:23) feel that grammar can be viewed from at least four different perspectives. Firstly, grammar may be taken to mean 'a particular branch of the study of language in general, distinct from but allied to the study of phonics on the other hand and the study of semantics on the other.' In this sense, grammar is an

abstract and theoretical field of specialisation in the study of language. The English Language operates by means of three components each generating its own peculiar code structures; semantics generates meaning structures, grammar generates both syntactic structures and morphological structures; phonology generates sound structures. Secondly, grammar is also used to mean the subject matter of study and not just a branch as in 'grammar school'. The third view has to do with acceptability or otherwise of some utterances. We often hear of a question like which is better grammar, "it's me or it's I"? In this respect, we are making or requesting judgments about the acceptability of certain expressions. Fourthly, grammar has come to be used to designate a set of rules which, when applied consciously or unconsciously, will produce the well-formed sentences which are possible in a language. Grammar, in this sense, therefore, refers to correct, acceptable and meaningful relationships that can be established between words in a given language. For the purpose of this paper, we shall take grammar to mean a set of established rules that enables users of any language to produce meaningful and acceptable utterances. Solarin (1982) shares the same view when he says:

... imagine yourself everyday watching people playing a game you do not know. After playing you will begin to understand the rules of the game, watching what the players do or must not do. Eventually you would be able to write out the rules of the game but it would take you a long time. If someone can tell you the rules, or you can read them in a book it will save you time.

He concludes by saying that the formation of the grammar of a language is rather like that. Grammarians observe how people use the language, and eventually they are able to say something like this: If you want to speak or write this language as other people do, then you must use this word in this way and you may not use these words in that way. The grammar of a language, therefore, can be seen as the description of the rules governing the use of that language for communication. We must remember, however, that language is continually being changed as people use it and so in the end the rules of the language must be rewritten. According to Solarin (1995), if we are to use language correctly and understand it thoroughly, "we need to know the rules, the grammar that describes the way it is used now". Language, therefore, like the game of football or hockey, is rule- governed. Within modern linguistic theory, to claim that language is rule governed is to claim it can be described in terms of grammar (Smith and Wilson, 1983). Grammar as a set of rules has two main tasks, separating grammatical from ungrammatical sentences, and providing a description of each of the grammatical sentences.

The view that the rules of language are flexible and no two speakers of a language possess exactly the same linguistic habits like in the case of children learning their first language or adults' idiosyncratic speech patterns only go to explain better that "the rules which adequately describe a language are not the

simple prescriptive maxims of the classroom, but a far more complex and subtle set of construct". The goal of grammar, therefore, is to account directly for the grammatical status and structure of sentences.

Throughout the classical and medieval periods, one major focus of grammatical studies was the identification of "faults". This was based on the notion that the grammarian's role is to define correct and incorrect uses of language. And this has persisted into the present, though it has been rejected by modern linguistics. But the way our students in tertiary institutions use English for communication today should perhaps force a shift of position. One clear evidence of the importance of the normative view of grammar in this period was the establishment in the 17<sup>th</sup> century of the French Academy. The main task of the Academy was (and still is) to define 'the art of speaking and writing correctly'.

Grammatical errors according to Smith and Wilson (1983) "are deviations from the appropriate linguistic convention or usages which contravene the established and acceptable rules of a given language". An error, therefore, is not just a slip or a systematic breach of the code. Though some of these can seriously impede effective communication, some do not. A successful communication act is when the message is received without being altered, confused or misunderstood. Owens (1996) agrees with this view when he says "Communication only takes place when the receiver has acknowledged receipt of exactly what the source intended." There are important factors that should be considered if we want to achieve effectiveness in communication:

- (a) The message sent should be received without distortion.
- (b) The intended action is taken or the intended result is achieved
- (c) The expected or actual reaction is demonstrated through feedback.

It can be seen clearly that language and communication are inextricable. The consensus among scholars is that language remains the most essential tool for communication, and when people learn a language they do so in order to express their thoughts and share ideas. All human communities, no matter where they live, primitive or civilised, have their complete and articulate language which has the characteristics of a code. The code depends on the tacit agreement between the speaker and the listener that a set of sounds or symbols systematised shall have certain references. In other words, language is a system of sounds which a group of people by mutual consent, use to symbolize certain things, actions and ideas. To communicate effectively, therefore, a good mastery of language is very important.

### **3. Error Classification**

Marking will afford teachers the opportunity to identify the errors. Identification of errors can be done by ringing or underlining the errors spotted. Then the errors are classified. According to Omojuwa (1977) errors can be classified linguistically. Psycho-linguistic classification attempts to relate the errors to the

stage of language learning. Psycho-linguistic classification is essential for error explanation which in turn determines the instructional strategy required for the error to be 'extinguished'. Depending on the learning stage, errors can be described as:

- (a) random errors
- (b) expression errors
- (c) rule formulation errors

Random errors occur by chance, perhaps, as a result of the 'idling of brain', fatigue or interference from the environment. They are slips or mistakes that can easily be identified and corrected by the learner himself. It is advisable that after reading through especially the written assignments of students once, the teacher should give back to the students their assignments for correction of possible errors they can identify themselves. At this stage, most random or mechanical errors will be corrected not by the teacher but by the student. Baddock (1988:24-30) supports this approach when he argues that:

... this is a motivating and profitable exercise for training grammatical accuracy... it is a defective activity in which students look for Grammatical mistakes that they know to exist.

Expression errors on the other hand, are quite different. They are such error students or the learners may not be able to identify by themselves but when the errors are identified for them, they will be able to correct. Expression errors occur when the learners are not very sure of the correct usage. Such errors do not affect the knowledge of the rule but the application of the rule. "The rule is known, but there has been a deficiency at the communicative use level".

There is also a category of errors that the learner cannot identify and even when such errors are identified for him, he will still not be able to correct. These are errors which involve both competence and performance. The learner does not know the language rule, therefore, cannot apply it. In other words, the errors have occurred at the rule formulation level. Such errors will continue to occur in the written English of the learner until the grammatical rule governing the correct usage is properly understood.

How then will a teacher be able to categorise the errors? One way a teacher will know which category an error belongs is when he adopts what experts call the 'Error Frequency Approach'. In this approach, the teacher tries to find out how many times a grammatical error occurs; how many times a structure is correct; how many times it is used wrongly. If, for example, an error occurs only once, it is likely to belong to the Random Error group. A structure or form that is consistently used wrongly throughout the composition is likely to belong to the category of rule formation errors. The ones that are used sometimes wrongly and some other times correctly are likely to be associated with Expression Errors.



The second approach is the 'Error Elimination Approach' which works better in a situation where it is possible for a teacher and learner to closely interact face to face. During the interaction, the teacher discusses with the learner the errors found in his written assignment just like a medical doctor will do with his patient. This normally affords the teacher that rare opportunity to ascertain precisely the problems of the learner to help him better. The fact that the learner himself is involved directly in the process of learning in this way is of immense pedagogical importance. The question, however, is the practicability of this approach in view of the large and almost unmanageable size of our classrooms today.

The greatest challenge to teachers is what to do with such errors that are said to belong to the Rule Formation category. These are errors that learners are not able, by themselves, to correct. Omojuwa (1977) suggests that it is important for the teacher to trace the origin and cause of an error before it is attacked. It is in this way that the effectiveness of treatment can be ensured.

By tracing the origin and cause of an error, the teacher should make efforts to know whether the errors are made by only one student or by many members of the class. This is the sociolinguistic aspect. The linguistic aspect has to do with whether the errors involve complex areas or non areas of grammar. It has been established that errors may be attributed to the following origins:

- (a) Inter-language interference e.g. LI vs. L2; L2 vs. LF
- (b) Intra-language interference manifested variously as over-generalisation, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, faulty categorisation, and hypercorrection.

An understanding of the nature of the error and the circumstances in which it has occurred is a prerequisite for an effective measure to be taken to eradicate it. To eradicate such errors, one school of thought has suggested the idea of 'selective exposure'. According to the proponents, errors can be prevented if the level of difficulty of language teaching materials is consistent with the different learning stages. In other words, the learners are exposed to only what they can cope with at each learning stage. The point here is that, there is need for caution when selecting teaching material or drawing up a syllabus for a course. What is selected to be taught must not only reflect or agree with the learning stage of the learner, but should also help in achieving the definite objective of studying the English language at that given stage or level. Sometimes, it may be very necessary to design remedial materials to eliminate errors.

Another school of thought holds the view that language acquisition and language learning are in stages and the learner passes through these successive stages until the final and the so-called 'perfect-stage' is reached. The adherents of this theory propound that errors are embedded in each transitional stage no matter what is done, such errors cannot be prevented. This position of course can be contested. It is the duty of a language teacher to prepare his work such that likely causes and areas of errors are removed before learners do any written work. When

errors still occur, there is no need to worry much. The occurrence of such errors only informs the teacher of the distance between the target language and the learner's transitional competence. The learner however, should be helped to narrow the gap between his transitional competence and the target language. It is the failure of teachers of Literature in the selected tertiary institutions to also focus on these ways especially as they examine students in Literature but still using the old method of examining students based on teaching Literature to students as purely an academic subject that is in contest in this paper. The following examples are randomly taken from the two semester examinations administered in some of these selected schools in the session under review that is used to buttress this point.

A.. With close reference to the play, describe Chume's attitude to Jero before and after he was allowed to beat his wife.

Mark out of 13:12 or 12;13 depending on presentation. Insist on candidates' ability to describe Jero's attitudes to the prophet before and after.

Point

I. Before

- (i) He looked on the prophet with reverence, respect, dependence, awe, and was full of praises for his power. E.g. He believes his progress at work, especially his promotion to the level of chief messenger was due to Jero's divine power sec. 3 pp 22 -23.
- (ii) He admired the prophet; saw him as being infallible, a man with divine power.
- (iii) There was a total master I servant relationship because of the power of his master. He relied on Jero for further future promotion p.23 "And by the Grace of God. Giving orders.
- (iv) He felt that Jero was grooming him as his successor and as such teaching thought he would endow him with his power. p. 25 "Rise Brother Chume... my mantle must descend?

II. After

- (i) He takes his wife to the prophet who is a debtor; he discovers to his chagrin that the prophet was his wife's debtor. P.37
- (ii) Chume soon finds himself confronted with the crisis of disenchantment.
- (iii) There is now disappointment and loss of credibility.
- (iv) He now believes that the prophet was having an affair sc.5 p.41 with his wife. sc.5.41 - 42 "what for why why "
- (v) He now runs after him with a matchet, "shouting: "Adulterer woman thief. Na today a go finish you." P.42
- (vi) He is totally disappointed.
- (vii) Develops a hostile attitude to the prophet for he now sees his folly.

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A good answer must refer closely to incidents in the text.

- B. Do you agree that *The Trials of Brother Jero* is an attack on religious hypocrisy? Give reasons for your answer.

Mark on impression out of 25 marks.

Points

- (i) Brother Jero is not a convinced Christian.

He is only a Christian preacher who uses the Christian tenets for his own selfish ends.

- (ii) It is not so much a yearning for the gospel message but a yearning to enter into the charmed circle of prophets that is behind Jero's founding of his church.

- (iii) The same thing goes for all members too because they are all escapists. The woman who reminds Jero that his mind is not in the service knows better why she is in the church; to get a child. p.25

- (iv) The calling of a prophet is portrayed like a commercial venture and not a divine calling.

"I grew up to love the trade." p. I

"I am glad I got here before my customers well, customers if you like. I always get a feeling every morning that I am a shop-keeper waiting for customers." Scene 3. p. 20

- (v) A very lustful prophet is presented instead of a very spiritual one. Brother Jero confesses this weakness when commenting on his old master's course-

"He knew very well that I had one weakness - woman scene 1. p. II

- (vi) In scene 3 p. 20 he follows the half-naked girl all the way with his eyes, and confesses how he is tormented every morning and every day by the appearance of the girl. He then begins to pray against lust.

- (vii) This is ridicule on the power tussle in the church. Instead of it to be a place of worship and spiritual renewal, the prophets employ all unholy methods to achieve their aims. p. 9 - 10.

- (viii) The Member of Parliament who at first feels superior to Brother Jero and his likes now proclaims Jero master in the name of religion. p. 40

- C. Explain how Wole Soyinka depicts social prejudice in. "Telephone Conversation"

The poem is about racial prejudice in England.

The blacks are not given accommodation by whites.

Soyinka in his poem exposes this prejudice by the following methods.

- 
- (i) The use of the art of a dramatist. The poem consist of a dialogue between the prospective tenant and the landlady and what may be considered stage-directions
  - (ii) At the end of the poem we feel we know the landlady and the hopeful tenant fairly well.
  - (iii) The use of appropriate diction technical language in order to make the sentences difficult for the landlady to understand: "West African sepia" all to ridicule the lady.
  - (iv) Use of Humour to invite the lady to come to see the rest of him. "Palm of my hand, soles of my feet are peroxide blonde".
  - (v) Element of Tension caused by the silence for telescopic flight of fancy... mouth piece".
  - (vi) Use of Parody ("public hide and speak") - The tenant is not bold enough to meet, in person, the landlady and has to communicate through the telephone to present his case, and indication, of the possibility that he might be snubbed if he called in person, given the racial situation in England.
  - (vii) Use of Irony - The fact that an African uses expressions in English which the English Landlady has never heard before: "West African sepia".  
-WHAT'S THAT? Conceding "DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS".
  - (viii) Use of Mockery and Cynicism-The use Landlady has been brought up in a civilised society and can not afford to expose her indignation openly. The anger is suppressed in the "hallow voice" in which she speaks. Again she is further ridiculed by the following apparent observations by the poet. "Voice, when it came I Lipstick coated, long gold-rolled I cigarette-holder piped.
  - (ix) Use of Metaphor - the use of the word "Clinical" is metaphorised; a words like "Red both, Red-pillar-box, Red double-tired omnibus" all refer to Britain.

Mark on impression out of 25. Any candidate who merely narrates the story of the poem without addressing himself to the demands of the question as above, should not be assessed beyond a maximum of 10 marks.

From the foregoing, one realises that the guides request mostly content data for the answers. This means that when the examiner approximates an answer or point raised and discussed to be close to the expected, the student shall earn marks. This is more so when the guides only say either "mark out... depending on presentation" or "mark on impression out of ...", etc. Meanwhile, a very close study of the scripts of the students showed that must of the students suffered numerously from errors of grammar that include those of errors of concord of non-agreement, wrong tense patterns, wrong adverbial particles, misuse of relative markers, subordinators, conjunctions, misrelated particles, misuse or omission of

particles, confusion of homophones and homographs, wrong prepositions, faulty amalgamation and separation of words, wrong use of punctuation, wrong spellings, dangling modifiers, and a host of other elements of structure. These types of instructions as in above, therefore, do not fail to examine the students Use of English, or are vague but have larger implications for both the student of Literature and for the beneficiary of their education upon their graduation eventually.

#### **4. Pedagogic Implications**

The teacher of Literature needs a good understanding of what Literature is and what it means to study it or to have a literary experience if he is to teach and examine it effectively. This is paramount at the starting point because the language of Literature differs from pragmatic or scientific language. In Literature, the importance of language is stressed. That is, it avoids ambiguity as much as possible. It draws little or no attention to itself - its primary purpose is to convey information as accurately as possible. To understand literary works, the reader has to be able to make inferences. Most of the time, the literary artist uses words and images because of their ambiguity, that is, their multiple meanings. He expects the reader to make inferences at many different levels about the actions of characters, about relationships between them, about images, about structure of the work as a whole.

What all this suggest is that Literature tends to abstract and order components of life in such a way that they become illuminated. According to Hillocks, McCabe and McCampbell (1971), "Literature makes the quality of experience concrete for us to examine and evaluate it within an aesthetic frame". They see a literary work as a verbal construct whose reference exists within the confines of the work, which may be regarded as a symbolic transformation of experience. Pugh (1982:32) further highlights the nature of Literature by defining it as, "... writing that pre-eminently reflects in depths and quality some aspect of the human experience, and illuminating it from the perspective of a sensitive and intelligent observer." Now, what does it mean to have a literary experience? Langer (1995) observes that Literature is thought-provoking and the way to engage in the literary experience is to be thoughtful. Literature is a distinct way of knowing because of the nature of the interaction between the reader and a literary work. This interaction is at three basic levels: cognitive, affective, and aesthetic. Literary experience involves openness and enquiry. Langer (1995:29) explains that

... we explore horizons or possibilities, involving a melding of Literature in life and life in Literature. We use knowledge of the real and the imaginary as well as previous experience with other Literature as the basis for our explorations. We use what we have gathered from life and Literature to explore emotions, relationships motives, and reactions, calling on what we learn or imagine to be (or not to be) human.

Williams also (1990:253) sees the study of Literature as "the experiencing of the human condition in its many facets of existence". The teacher's major aim, therefore, according to him, is to enable his students to share in the imaginative life of the author. To experience Literature, therefore, is to explore positions, to become more human, to develop a breath of understanding, to become better thinkers, and to become more mature. In other words, Literature instruction and by extension, examination, should help students think about ideas, consider alternative ways, modify and defend the salient ones, clarify and distinguish their responses from others and build interpretations; that is, as Langer (1995) puts it, it should help "students become more thoughtful readers and thinkers". No wonder, Nigeria's National Policy on Education (1998) outlines the need to achieve the following objectives:

- inculcating in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity (p 10)
- laying a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking (p 12)
- characters and moral training and the development of sound attitudes (p 12); and
- raising a generation of people who can think for themselves and who respect the views and feelings of others (p 16).

All that has been said about the nature of Literature and its study has important implication for pedagogy. In Nigeria where English is a second language, Literature reading assumes a particularly critical role. Literature not only provides a means of continued learning of the language outside the classroom, but also serves an important demonstration of the language in use. If teachers want their students to use English language proficiently, they need to improve or devise new ways to achieve that. This new method is not only to teach it but examine it just like the original composition in English Language is examined cognizance must be taken of things like content, organization, and especially expression and mechanical accuracy. Research has shown that English is taught poorly in Nigerian schools. Adesina (2006:8) observes that "what many of these schools have as teachers in the main are incompetent users of the English Language who are employed to teach English Language in a system where English is the language of instruction". No wonder, Oguntuase (2006:20) quotes Madunagu's comment that Nigerian graduates from 1977 to date should be given only "certificate of attendance." Teaching and examining Literature as in above would certainly compound the issue.

The above scenario is partly due to the absence of these teachers, or poor pedagogy, or in respect of this paper, of allowing graduates of Literature to teach English Language at all levels of our education. The very last point has very grave implications because by his training, the graduate of Literature is academically trained in Literature alone. The teaching of English is not part of his training, hence, the need to begin to combine the proposed method to ensure that he would have been trained to face the teaching of English even though he majored in Literature only.



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## 37. Child Language Research in Nigeria: The State of the Art

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### **Introduction**

The significance of pedolinguistics to overall national development cannot be overemphasized. Research on child language development (CLD) is relevant to areas such as language teaching and language learning, abnormal language development and remediation, language policy in bilingual education, and childhood bilingualism (particularly its effects on intelligence, language skills, and performance at school). Moreover, parents as well as teachers, linguists, developmental psychologists, language policy makers, speech therapists and pediatricians are all interested in, and also benefit from investigations into CLD. This may explain the proliferation of CLD studies in the technologically advanced countries of America, Asia, and Europe. In the developing nations of Africa, however, CLD is more or less in its infancy. Only a few studies involving African children have been conducted for higher degrees. Even in Nigeria, the most populous and linguistically heterogeneous country in Africa, where hundreds of languages co-exist, CLD studies are still scanty (Unoh 1981; Ndahi 1982; Surakat 1992, 2001 & 2004). It is against this backdrop that this paper aims at summarizing the current state of CLD research in Nigeria, in terms of quantity and quality of the studies. Emphasis is, however, placed on CLD studies of Nigerian preschoolers conducted for higher degrees at the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria between 1981 and 2001. This paper also discusses, among other things, the factors responsible for the dearth of CLD research, as well as the prospects of pedolinguistics in Nigeria.

### **History of CLD Research**

Child language scholarship, intrinsically a part of developmental or child psychology, dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Tiedemann (1787), a German philosopher, was recognized as the first scholar to publish a text on his son's behavioural development which also includes an account of the Subject's language acquisition (Slobin, in Foreword to Dromi 1987). Other works related to child development published before the birth of linguistics as an autonomous scientific discipline include Darwin (1877), Taine (1877) and Preyer (1888). As child psychologists probed the development of behaviour at infancy, they inevitably encountered the emergence of linguistic or communicative behaviour which invariably shed more light on their primary objective (i.e. the investigation of child behaviour). Most of these studies were based either on anecdotal data, or diaries of the researchers' children.

It is pertinent, however, to state that before this period, there were some crude, pseudo-scientific experiments on child language, albeit for a different motive. According to Fromkin & Rodman (1978:20): “In the fifth century B.C., the Greek historian Herodotus reported that the Egyptian Pharaoh Psammetichus (664 – 610 B.C.) sought to determine the most primitive ‘natural’ language.... (He) placed two (newly-born) infants (of poor parentage) in an isolated mountain hut, to be cared for by a servant who was cautioned not to utter a single word in their presence on the pain of death”. After two years, the first word uttered by the children was *bekos*, which meant ‘bread’ in Phrygian, a language (then) spoken somewhere around modern Turkey. This inhuman technique of investigation was replicated (around 1493) by King James IV of Scotland (1473-1513) with the result that ‘the children spoke very good Hebrew’. About two centuries prior to the ‘experiment’ by James IV of Scotland, the Roman Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen (d. 1250) carried out a similar test, but without any results because the children died before they could utter a word (Fromkin & Rodman 1978: 21; see also Crystal 1971/1982: 46 – 47).

Today, child language development (or CLD) is studied mainly as an aspect of developmental psycholinguistics which deals generally with language acquisition and language learning. The term *pedolinguistics* has been coined specifically to refer to the scientific study of child language; the morpheme ‘pedo’ (or ‘paedo’) in the blend signifying ‘child’ (Peng 1978; Kanda 1981; Oksaar 1983 & 1991). This is similar to the coinage of psycholinguistics, a blend of psychology and linguistics, which according to Garnham (1985: 1) is “the study of the mental mechanisms that make it possible for people to use language. It is a scientific discipline whose goal is a coherent theory of the way in which language is produced and understood”. In essence, psycholinguistics is an interdisciplinary subject concerned with the interplay between ‘Language and Mind’ to use the words of Chomsky (1968). However, the most developed aspect of the subject is *pedolinguistics*, especially the acquisition of language by preschoolers (see also Crystal 1971/1982: 255; Crystal 1985: 251; Kess 1993; Surakat 1992 & 2001).

CLD received more scientific attention as from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the birth of modern linguistics. Scholars investigated the speech development of individual monolingual as well as bilingual children, usually based on diaries of the researchers’ children (naturalistic, longitudinal observations or case studies). The diary studies of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century include Chamberlin & Chamberlin (1904), Stern & Stern (1907), Ronjat (1913), and Leopold (1939 – 1949). Most of these are either linguists or psychologists who used ‘paper and pen’ for data collection since the technology for audio and video recording had not been fully developed. The period between 1930 and 1950, when structuralism and behaviourism gained popularity both in Europe and the United States, witnessed a rigorous application of linguistic procedures to the analysis of child language data. The end of the Second World War also witnessed a proliferation of CLD research, and these continued even with the introduction of transformational grammar and rationalism championed by Noam Chomsky from

the late 1950s onward (Chomsky 1957, 1959, & 1968). This period also marked the emergence of cross-sectional, experimental studies involving groups of children who vary in sex, age, birth position, and socio-economic background (Brown 1980, and Surakat 2001).

### **The Significance of Child Language Research**

Child language research, as a sub-part of psycholinguistics, is conducted mainly because of its utility value, and also due to the cost-benefits. Pedolinguistics as an interdisciplinary enterprise is of interest to people of diverse groups and orientations, for different purposes, and from various perspectives. Researchers in CLD may, generally speaking, concentrate on one of two aspects; the theoretical angle, or the practical, applied side. The theoretical focus attempts to provide linguistic or psychological explanations for the nature of human language, its acquisition and use. The practical angle entails the application of linguistic or psychological knowledge to problem-solving in areas such as language disorders (as in speech pathology), second language teaching and learning (or applied linguistics), bilingualism and its effects on language skills, and so on (Aaronson & Rieber 1979; Kess 1993). It is necessary, therefore, to highlight the significance of CLD research to some disciplines, professionals and individuals; and invariably to overall national development.

In the words of de Villiers & de Villiers (1979) “of all the young child’s startling accomplishments, none is as impressive and mysterious than his entrance into the world of language”. For this and other reasons, therefore, parents are often eager to hear their children ‘talk’, and when the emergence of speech is delayed, they become worried. The anxiety by parents over late appearance of the spoken words in their children is due to the role which language plays in the socialization process, and as an indicator of normal development which they believe would be hampered if the child does not ‘speak’ early enough. The fears of such parents can be allayed if it is known that late start of speech in childhood is not as serious or abnormal as they imagine, provided the child does not suffer deformities or pathological complications which adversely affect the organs of speech, or the language areas of the brain. Research findings have shown that some children start ‘talking’ as early as 7 or 8 months, while other children delay until they are about 15 months old (see also Brown 1973; Dromi 1987; Surakat 2001). With all things being equal, late starters would always catch up with early starters.

Early or late emergence of speech at infancy depends on a number of environmental, cultural, neurolinguistic, cognitive, and other factors. For instance, lack of affection or parental care, deprivation, and malnutrition are crucial factors. Children in the orphanage or those who suffer neglect are generally known to perform below average compared to their counterparts who received adequate parental attention. Children who interact with older siblings are also more likely to start speaking earlier than isolated children. By implication, therefore, birth position of the child may affect how early or late s/he starts ‘talking’. Similarly, exposure to two or more languages simultaneously can delay the emergence of

speech in infants since every concept or idea has to be associated with more than one word (de Villiers and de Villiers, 1979: 24). In addition, vocabulary and speech development is observed to be generally faster for girls than for boys, although a few studies state the contrary (Jespersen 1922:146; de Villiers & de Villiers 1978:25).

Apart from parents, CLD research is also of interest to developmental psychologists, developmental sociologists, teachers, linguists, language artists, communication theorists, speech therapists or language pathologists, pediatricians, and so on. Child psychologists for instance are interested in CLD mainly because the use of language also constitutes a form of human behaviour. According to Unoh (1981:4) "...developmental psychologists... find the study of language development necessary and useful because of their concern with the ways various attributes of human organism (including verbal knowledge and behaviour) are acquired and developed at the various stages and the way the systematic development of such attributes can be impeded by poor or ineffective language development".

The developmental sociologist, culture expert and social anthropologist cannot but be fascinated by the way children are integrated into their various cultures predominantly through the medium of language which serves as a vehicle for socialization, or the medium for the transmission of societal values and norms. The communication theorist who is concerned with effective interpersonal communication and its hindrances should be interested in the subtle as well as intricate blend of linguistic and paralinguistic devices used by children to express their emotions and desires. If an adult is not familiar with the speech mannerisms and idiosyncrasies of the child, he may not be able to decipher the child's utterances in a given context because both of them do not share the same "frame of reference". In other words, there may be a breakdown in communication since the world of the child is not exactly the same as that of the adult. Studies have shown that infants rely on the immediate context, 'the here and now', body language, and other non-verbal cues in addition to their few words. The communication expert, therefore, must come to terms with this and other facts to be able to decode the language of the child.

A major preoccupation of the language artist is the creative and productive use of language in communication and learning, particularly how this can enhance or hamper the effective application of the four basic language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing). To that extent, the language art specialist would be interested in any study which sheds more light on the acquisition of any, or all of these skills, notwithstanding whether it is from the perspective of the developmental psychologist, sociologist or psycholinguist (Unoh, 1981:5).

Linguists, whose concern is the scientific investigation of the nature and structure of human language, are equally interested in the phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and communicative features of child language. In order to fully comprehend adult linguistic knowledge or behaviour, it is pertinent to trace its evolution from infancy. Even if the theoretical linguist is



interested in “language for language sake”, the sociolinguist, pedolinguist, neurolinguist and psycholinguist are interested in the application of child language data to solving other practical problems. Various linguistic models (e.g. structural and transformational) have been used to analyze both child and adult language.

CLD research is relevant to speech therapy to the extent that one has to know what constitutes normal language development in order to effectively diagnose and remedy deviant or abnormal speech. ‘Delayed’, ‘deviant’ or ‘disordered’ language (as speech abnormalities/disabilities in children are often called) is the concern of specialists in fields such as medicine, clinical linguistics and neurolinguistics, but CLD research can facilitate the job of the speech pathologist. In addition, CLD research findings can provide a basis for designing special education programmes to help linguistically challenged children, or those with ‘specific language impairment (Bloom and Lahey 1978; Yusuf 1984; Kess 1993; Surakat 2003; and Yul-Ifode 2006). Similarly, the pediatrician should benefit from CLD studies since he interacts with children in the cause of examining them. Familiarity with the nature of children’s speech is, therefore, necessary for the ‘healer of the child’ in order to facilitate his job.

CLD research is, perhaps, most relevant to pedagogy, but with particular reference to second language teaching and learning, as well as educational planning. For instance, in the teaching of preschoolers and school age children, the teacher needs to know the linguistic and cognitive capabilities of the pupils to be able to impart knowledge appropriate to their level. In preparing the syllabus, the teacher or curriculum designer would start from the simple or basic to complex, and from concrete to abstract concepts, otherwise, his teaching may not be effective or meaningful. This is further attested to by the ‘derivational theory of complexity’ (Mamman-Katsina 1992: 271; Kess 1993:28 & 120; Yusuf 1984; and Surakat 2000b).

Language policy in bilingual education is another area which benefits tremendously from the findings of CLD research, especially works on bilingual children. What language should serve bilingual children at the nursery, primary or even post-primary levels? How can two or more languages be used effectively to serve as the media of instruction in bilingual/multilingual educational institutions? Policy makers would have to rely on CLD research findings to take appropriate decisions. This is one area where the Nigerian bilingual education system suffers most as a result of dearth or lack of CLD research (McLaughlin 1984; Winsler et al. 1999; Surakat 1992 & 2000b; etc).

### **The State of CLD Research in Nigeria**

In Africa generally, CLD is a neglected area of scientific inquiry. As at 1982, only three studies were recorded to have involved African children, and they were conducted for higher degrees mainly in foreign institutions (Ndahi, 1982: 5). Incredible as the 1982 revelation may appear, it seems that no significant improvement has occurred since then particularly in Nigeria, where several languages and cultures co-exist. From available records, Nigerian universities



have not developed the desired interest in the study of language development of the pre-school age children. This assertion is supported by the findings of a recent library investigation. Departments of Languages and Linguistics in Nigerian universities have emphasized the study of adult language at the expense of infant speech (Surakat 1992 & 2000; see also Unoh 1981). Various linguistic models have been applied to analyse the utterances and writings of mature (ideal) language users, but little or no attention is paid to the study of child language, in spite of its overall significance. However, the Ahmadu Bello University has recorded some doctoral dissertations and Master's theses in CLD (e.g. Ndahi 1982; Akpughunum 1986; Kumbi 1986; Mamman-Katsina 1992; Onyenobi 1997; and Surakat 2001).

This is not to suggest that CLD research is completely lacking in other institutions, but that they are rather too scanty to make meaningful impact on Nigeria's national development drive. It is very important, therefore, to reverse the unfortunate trend in the interest of the nation. This is a challenge to all the first and second generation universities, and degree-awarding Colleges of Education, and allied institutions. It is worth noting that The Ife Project (or Six Year Primary Project on mother-tongue education) of the 1960s is a kind of CLD research, although based on school-age children (Fafunwa et al. 1989). The Rivers State Readers Project is also CLD-related. There are a few other studies worth mentioning: Yusuf (1984) is an M. A. thesis on the phonological acquisition of a Hausa child, just as Oyebade (1990) and Ojukwu (2006) are on the phonological development of Yoruba and Igbo children respectively. Oladejo (1989) and Onyewotu (1989) are among the very few studies on bilingual preschoolers. It is in view of the paucity of CLD research in Nigeria that the efforts at the Ahmadu Bello University deserve some mention.

Ndahi, (1982) is a two-volume doctoral research titled: "Second Language Acquisition in Childhood: A Case Study". It is a longitudinal observational research on the speech development of a Nigerian girl (Mana) who acquired English in addition to Hausa, Bassa-Nge and Nigerian Pidgin while she was between three and five years of age. The observations were done in natural contexts (e.g. school, home, playground, etc) and were recorded using the multi-media technique (i.e. hand-written diary, audio and video recordings). Data transcription was based on Bloom & Lahey (1978). The 'eclectic' psycholinguistic theoretical approach (a blend of behaviourism and innatism) is adopted, while the structural, functional linguistic model is used for the description and analysis of data. Ndahi, (1982) is significant because it shows the similarities and differences between the Nigerian child and other children (cited in other works) who acquired English as a second language in terms of stages of language development as well as strategies employed in the acquisition of English negatives and interrogatives. It reveals the universal features of second language acquisition as well as those features which are conditioned by the environment in which English is acquired as a second language (or L2) – see also Mamman-Katsina (1992:77). Ndahi (1982) is

a case of consecutive or sequential bilingualism (McLaughlin, 1984) which has far-reaching pedagogical implications.

Some unpublished Master of Education theses have also been produced based on Ndahi's (1982) data. These include Akpughunum (1986) and Kumbi (1986). Akpughunum's thesis, for instance, is titled: "The Interlanguage Hypothesis in Second Language Acquisition: A Case Study of a Nigerian Child" and it illustrates the concept of mother tongue interference, among other things. In addition, Surakat (2006) used Ndahi's data to discuss two varieties of English spoken in Nigeria from the perspective of the preschooler. These varieties are the Nigerian Pidgin English (or simply Nigerian Pidgin) and the Standard Nigerian English or Jowitt's (1991/2000) Popular Nigerian English. In essence, Ndahi (1982) contains rich data on language acquisition that can be analysed from different perspectives, especially for its relevance to applied linguistics or language teaching, and so on. Ndahi (1982) was timely because it came shortly after Unoh (1981) had lamented the dearth of research on the speech of Nigerian preschoolers.

A decade after Ndahi's, Mamman-Katsina (1992) produced another two-volume doctoral dissertation, but on the speech of a monolingual Nigerian child. It is titled "Language Acquisition Process: A Case Study of Syntactic Development of a Hausa Child". It is on the acquisition of statements, interrogatives, commands and negatives by the son of the researcher between the age of 25 and 60 months. The hand-written diary was complemented with 54 sixty-minute audio-recording sessions in the process of data collection. The study shows the strategies used by the child in acquiring Hausa commands, negatives and interrogatives. It also compares the stages and strategies of language development in the Hausa child with those of other monolingual children reported in some studies conducted in Europe and America. The dissertation which was submitted to the Curriculum and Instruction Section of the Department of Education draws conclusions which are relevant to the teaching of Hausa and other Nigerian languages. It also made recommendations to Hausa language planners as well as producers and designers of instructional materials (teaching aids) for the pre-primary and early primary stages.

Surakat (2001) is another two-volume doctoral dissertation on the language development of the author's son, Baba, who simultaneously acquired English, Hausa and Yoruba between the age of 12 and 36 months. Titled "Code-mixing in the Language Development of a Bilingual Nigerian Child", the research focused on the grammatical structures, motivations and strategies of language hybridization in the speech of the preschooler. The data were collected for a period of 24 months, using the three-media approach involving audio, video and diary recordings. The Cognitive Process Model (or Interactive Cognitivism) and Systemic Functional Generative Grammar respectively served as the theoretical and analytical frameworks for the study. Three general categories of code-mixing are identified: Pseudo, Subsidiary, and Substantive or Genuine code-mixing, although the focus of the research is on genuine code-mixing. It is observed that

intra-sentential code-switching in the child's speech is motivated by such factors as the nature and context of language presentation, profile of co-interlocutors, topic of discussion, language gap, as well as stylistic and cognitive factors. The strategies employed for code-mixing by the child include: imitation and speech modeling, creative construction, simplification, translation and transference. The data also reveal that code-mixing in child language is, more or less, a reflection of language hybridization by adult bilinguals.

Onyenobi (1997) is a Master's thesis on "Mother-Child Linguistic Interaction" which focuses on the effect of 'motherese' (or care-giver language) on the speech development of a girl (Chi) between 10 and 18 months. Chi's father is Ibo from Imo State while the mother is Isoko from Edo State thus making English the dominant language of the family. Audio-tape recordings of the English words produced and comprehended by the child during the one-word or holophrastic speech constitute the data. In all, a list of the first 50 words uttered, and the first 50 words understood by Chi were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The research reveals, among other things, that comprehension precedes production. On the average, Chi could understand twenty words before she could produce her first ten words. The study also reveals that, for both production and comprehension, all major word categories such as specific and general nominals, action words, social words, and so on appear in the first fifty vocabulary items of Chi. Overextension and under-extension are also observed as the major semantic features of Chi's vocabulary. Some of the features of motherese observed include simplicity of expression (in terms of syntax and style), repetition and redundancy, positive and negative reinforcement, as well as concentration on the 'here and now'. These and other factors facilitate effective communication between mother and child, just as they positively aid Chi's language growth.

The few studies on CLD conducted so far have their merits and relevance, but there is room for improvement in terms of quantity and quality of research. Ndahi (1982), Mamman-Katsina (1992) and Surakat (2001) contain very rich data transcribed in volume two of each dissertation. These pieces of information can be further analysed from different perspectives to explicate phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and communicative features of infant speech, especially as they are relevant to applied linguistics, speech pathology, child psychology, and so on. The CLD studies in A. B. U., and others mentioned above have a good gender balance because both boys and girls are involved. However, all the children are from the middle-class and urban background resulting in the neglect of infants of rural, peasant, and low-income families. This is an imbalance in the coverage of CLD research that must be redressed with time considering the fact that a significant majority of children belong to rural and peasant families.

In terms of theoretical and analytical frameworks, the studies are adequate because they variously applied behaviourism, innatism, structuralism, generative phonology and systemic linguistics which are in vogue in the social sciences, even in Western scholarship. Adequate reliability and validity measures are also taken,

and these have a positive impact on the findings of the various studies. However, only Ndahi (1982) and Surakat (2001) used the three-media technique for data collection, while Yusuf (1984), Oladejo (1989), Onyewotu (1989), Oyebade (1990), Mamman-Katsina (1992), and Onyenobi (1997) relied only on audio-tape and handwritten records. CLD research can benefit more from video recording of data since infant speech rely heavily on paralinguistic and other contextual features which audio-tape cannot capture. But then adequate precautions must be taken to minimize the negative effects of video camera on data collection, especially of natural, spontaneous speech.

All the works mentioned above are longitudinal case studies which allow for a thorough, in-depth study of individual children. There are no cross-sectional, experimental studies probably because the resources for experimental research are lacking, especially expertise, laboratory equipment and facilities. Although case studies have their own merits, findings based on isolated, individual children cannot be easily generalized; except where several case studies produce similar results (Dromi 1986; Surakat 2001). It is necessary, therefore, to acquire expertise and resources for experimental research in pedolinguistics, especially because of its developmental and utility values. Findings of cross-sectional experiments are more amenable to generalization than longitudinal case studies. Furthermore, all the studies mentioned so far (except Onyenobi 1997) focus on speech production, at the expense of comprehension. Although some of the studies used elicitation techniques, it is very important to investigate both production and comprehension because they are complementary skills which together can produce a broad picture of children's linguistic and communicative abilities.

It is pertinent to state also that only a negligible few Nigerian languages have so far been covered by CLD research: Yoruba, Hausa, Nupe/Bassa-Nge, Igbo and, of course, Nigerian English. Considering the fact that there are about 400 languages in Nigeria, it is necessary to embark on pedolinguistic research involving monolingual and bilingual children from the diverse linguistic and cultural groups across the country. Language policy in bilingual education contexts and the National Policy on Education but particularly the Mother-Tongue Education policy shall benefit tremendously from a proliferation of CLD research in Nigeria. It is for this reason also that English Language students of the Ahmadu Bello University are encouraged to work on different aspects of child language acquisition for their B.A. (Honours) final year mini-projects. There are also on-going M.A. studies on CLD in the Faculty of Arts.

### **Why the Dearth of CLD Research in Nigeria?**

Perhaps, it is a symptom of developing nations that important research areas are neglected, but the case of Nigeria which has a lot of potentials and enormous resources is rather pathetic. Several decades after independence, and with over 80 universities (some of which have existed for more than four decades), there ought to have been a proliferation of research in developmental areas such as CLD. It is a fact, however, that CLD studies generally, but particularly longitudinal case

studies can be tedious, cumbersome as well as labour and capital intensive. Objective, well-conducted CLD research requires a good deal of effort, patience and funds. A postgraduate student who must obtain his Master's or Ph.D in 2 or 3 years cannot afford a longitudinal case study which takes a minimum of 6 years as was the case with Ndahi (1982), Mamman-Katsina (1992), and Surakat (2001). Many postgraduate students, therefore, prefer topics which take shorter period, and which are less demanding in terms of finance and labour. This may also explain why there are very few Nigerian specialists in child language studies.

There are journals and other publications in CLD-related fields such as Languages and Linguistics, Language Teaching or Applied Linguistics, Nigerian/African Languages, and so on. However, most of these publications emphasize the language of school-age children and adults almost to the exclusion of child language scholarship. For instance, Unoh's (1981) journal article titled: "Topical Issues in the Study of Language Development" did not make any reference to a CLD research conducted in Nigeria. Moreover, the *Journal of the Nigerian Language Teacher* since 1981 has been concerned with issues such as the national language policy, the teaching of African languages and related matters, but no single article has been produced on child language (Mamman-Katsina, 1992: 9).

The *Nigerian Journal of Sociolinguistics* (1989) and the University of Ibadan-based *Journal Research in African Languages and Linguistics* (1990) are among the few which contain articles on CLD (e.g. Oladejo, 1989; Onyewotu, 1989; and Oyebade 1990) all of which have been earlier mentioned in this paper. In contrast, 3 consecutive conferences of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria held in 1985, 1986 and 1987 respectively focused on the themes Multilingualism, Minority Languages, and Language Policy in Nigeria. A book edited by Emenanjo (1990) has been published based on the papers presented at the conferences, but none of the articles is on child language acquisition as it relates to the themes (see also Surakat, 1992). Moreover, the defunct National Language Centre (NLC) and National Institute for Nigerian Languages made little or no significant contributions to children's acquisition and learning of Nigerian languages. Articles on CLD or language abnormalities are either very few or non-existent in the Institute's journal, just as research on CLD are lacking. The same is true for the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council.

The consequences of the dearth of research in CLD for Nigeria are grave and numerous. The major effect is the tendency to borrow, wholly or in part, alien systems which do not quite fit into our environment. For instance, the education and language policies of the developed world have been imported into Nigeria without due consideration for their suitability and relevance to the Nigerian socio-cultural milieu. Research findings would have availed the policy-makers relevant empirical data to guide them in policy formulation. Unfortunately, some decisions have been imposed without taking into cognizance our peculiar circumstances. A few examples which relate to language planning in schools can be cited.



The National Policy on Education (NPE 1977, 1981, 1998 & 2004) provides for Transitional Bilingualism in which case the L<sub>1</sub> (Mother Tongue) or the Language of the Immediate Community is used as the medium of instruction in the first 3 years of primary education, while English is used at the upper primary level. This provision reflects Transitional Bilingualism (TB) as practiced in some parts of the United States and Canada (see McLaughlin, 1984). There is also strong advocacy for Mother-Tongue Education (MTE) that children be taught all subjects in their first languages throughout their primary education. The Six-Year Primary Programme was an experiment conducted by the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) in the 1970s with the conclusion that children learn better when taught through the medium of their L<sub>1</sub>, and this is the basis for the propagation of Mother-Tongue Education (Fafunwa et al (eds), 1989; and Bamgbose, 1992; cf. Surakat 1992).

TB or MTE would be more meaningful with CLD research at the pre-primary as well as the junior primary levels. This implies that Nigerian children in various settings (rural, urban, monolingual, multilingual, homogeneous and heterogeneous) should be studied as they acquire the various indigenous languages. With this, it would be possible for us to understand the peculiarities of our environment in a clearer perspective, and thereafter, arrive at informed or research-based decisions to guide the policy makers. In essence, a result-oriented curriculum for either TB or MTE can only be designed after extensive studies of the acquisition of as many Nigerian languages as possible (see also Surakat 1992).

The NPE also states that children (right from the primary level) must learn another major Nigerian language (i.e. Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba as the case may be) in addition to their L<sub>1</sub> and English. The objective of this is foster national integration and unity necessary for meaningful development. However, apart from the logistic problems of inadequate language teachers, text books, primers, and other necessary facilities, this provision also suffers from inadequate research in L<sub>1</sub> acquisition as well as the learning and acquisition of L<sub>2</sub>, especially with reference to pre-primary and junior primary children. In fact, the problems of inter-lingual transfer in learners of the different Nigerian languages are yet to be fully explored. But the NPE (1998 & 2004) has introduced another foreign language (French) to be learnt by children in school. "For smooth interaction with our neighbours, it is desirable for every Nigeria (sic) to speak French. Accordingly, French shall be the second official language in Nigeria, and it shall be compulsory in school". The implication of this politically motivated clause is that a child would have to grapple with English and French, in addition to the mother tongue, language of the immediate community, and another major Nigerian language.

The psycholinguistic implications of childhood bilingualism, L<sub>2</sub> and foreign language learning, and the effects on intelligence or performance at school can best be determined after numerous studies have been carried out on simultaneous/parallel as well as consecutive/sequential bilingual children. Issues related to motivation and attitude in L<sub>2</sub> learning cannot be neglected in



formulating language policies in a bilingual education context. We should not create extra burden for children or deplete our lean resources simply because of “smooth interaction with our neighbours”. Nigeria has not been able to adequately fund education and research, yet another foreign, second official language is to be imposed. A proliferation of CLD research is, therefore, inevitable so as to bring into focus the variables which can guide policy makers and teachers alike. It is part of our ‘Social Responsibility’ as linguists to advise government and policy makers accordingly (see also Banjo 1995: 5; Bamgbose 2006; Emenanjo 2006).

### Recommendations

From the issues raised above, it becomes clear that extensive CLD research is a *sine qua non* for effective language planning as it affects the education system. Adequate attention should be paid to language acquisition and learning by kindergartners and older pupils as well. Developmental psycholinguists, language artists, educational/developmental psychologists, curriculum experts, (among others) should be encouraged and supported (by way of research grants) to engage in relevant CLD studies, individually or through collaborative, inter-disciplinary ventures.

Conventional universities and degree-awarding Colleges of Education should take up the challenge which CLD research poses. While undergraduates are involved in CLD short-duration studies for their final-year projects, postgraduate students should be encouraged to embark on case studies or experimental studies. Sponsorships and research grants should be awarded candidates to conduct CLD research.

Expertise or man-power related to child language scholarship should be recruited, or Nigerians can be sponsored to acquire the knowledge and skills required. In addition, adequate facilities and laboratory equipment should be provided for research in Nigerian institutions, including the Language Development Centre and Nigerian Educational Research Development Centre.

The number of indigenous Nigerian languages is staggering, but for the purposes of CLD research, emphasis should be on Unoh’s (1982) groups ‘A’ and ‘B’ languages. In group ‘A’ are the 3 major languages: Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. Group ‘B’ languages are relatively less widely spoken compared with the group ‘A’ languages, although they are very popular at the State and Local Government levels. These include Edo, Egun, Fulfulde, Gwari, Igala, Ijaw, Itsekiri, Idoma, Kanuri, Nupe, Tiv, and so on. It is also important that the acquisition and/or learning of English and Nigerian Pidgin should be on the priority list. The number can be enlarged as the occasion demands.

It is desirable to have a professional association or body for child language studies in which case membership would be drawn from the various related disciplines such as applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, child or developmental psychology, educational psychology, neurolinguistics, language pathology, curriculum studies, and so on. As a corollary, the association should have a journal through which research findings can be disseminated quarterly,

biannually or at the least annually. It also follows that conferences, seminars, workshops are organised regularly, and efforts made to get sponsorship for these laudable, development-oriented projects. LAN has a role to play in this direction.

Relevant ministries (e.g. Education, Youth Development, Culture, etc), parastatals (e.g. the National Primary Education Commission, National Commission for Colleges of Education, and the National Universities Commission), States and Local Governments, bodies such as the Society for the Promotion of Igbo Language and Culture, Kanuri Language Board, private and community-based organizations, and well-meaning individuals should be involved in promoting and funding research and publications on CLD.

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## 38. ICT in Language Teaching & Learning: Challenges and Prospects

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Information and Communication Technology (ICT), which consists of the use of electronic processes to support storing and retrieving of information, as well as making it available for usage as appropriate, has many application areas in human life. The use of this ICT in education in general, and the teaching and learning of languages in particular cannot be overemphasised. In this paper, an attempt is made to discuss the impact and advantages this technology has over both the traditional teaching and learning methods (chalkboard, textbook) and some modern counterparts (radio, television). Some basic ICT training tasks for teaching and learning of languages as well as some of the ICT resources that could be used are illustrated. The challenges facing the implementation of this method of teaching and learning especially in a developing country like Nigeria are highlighted. Despite the shortcomings observed, the future of this technology in Nigeria is also examined.

**Keywords:** ICT, Teaching methods, Internet.

### Introduction

There is no doubt that the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in all aspects of education especially in teaching and learning is inevitable in today's world. In fact, the advent of the Internet has further enhanced this. As Shavinina (2001) put it, the main purpose of ICT can be viewed in the development of human mental resources, which allow people to both successfully apply the existing knowledge and produce new knowledge/skill. Though the chalkboard, textbooks, radio/television and film have been used for educational purpose over the years, none has quite impacted on the educational process like the computer (Aduwa-Ogieghaen and Iyamu 2005). While television and film impact only on the audiovisual faculties of users, the computer is capable of activating the senses of sight, hearing and touch of the users. ICT has the capacity to provide higher interactive potential for users to develop their individual, intellectual and creative ability.

Presently, every teacher, irrespective of the area of specialisation is expected to know how to use this technology in teaching. The use of internet, for instance, is not expected to be limited to email and sometimes in a discussion lists. Gone are those days that ICT policy and the use of this technology were perceived as an issue reserved for specialists (Burch quoted in Marcelle 2002). Computers, which is one of the tools often used in ICT is very common nowadays in classroom teaching and learning especially in the developed countries. Some Africa countries, Uganda as an example, now use information and communication



technology to help secondary school students to become better information users (Aduwa-Ogieghaen and Iyamu 2005). The case of Nigeria is not like that. As discovered by Okebukola (1997), computer is not part of classroom technology in most public schools in Nigeria. Majority of most schools activities are dominated by chalkboard and textbooks. This paper intends to discuss this paramount issue.

Subsequently in this paper, the importance of ICT in teaching and learning especially as it applies to languages is enumerated. Next, some basic ICT training tasks expected of a teacher of languages is discussed. The challenges facing the embracement of the use of this technology of learning are highlighted. Lastly, some ways out are also listed.

### **The need for Adoption of ICT in Education**

Using ICT in education has the potential to open up several avenues of broader innovations (Hughes 1994). ICT tools, especially computers can facilitate self-paced learning. Information Technology (IT) based teaching and learning strategies will open possibilities for designing new curriculum and new methods of assessment to meet our educational objectives.

In the Computer Aided Instruction (CAI) mode, computers individualise learning, while giving immediate reinforcement and feedback. Computers are multimedia tool. With integrated graphic, print, audio, and video capabilities, computers can effectively link various technologies. Interactive video and CD-ROM technologies can be incorporated into computer-based instructional units, lessons, and learning environments.

Computers are interactive. Microcomputer systems incorporating various software packages are extremely flexible and maximise learner control. Computer technology is rapidly advancing. Innovations are constantly emerging, while related costs drop. By understanding their present needs and future technical requirements, the cost-conscious educator can effectively navigate the volatile computer hardware and software market.

### **Technologies and Tools used in Teaching and Learning of Languages**

Various forms of technologies may be used. These include the use of a word processor like Microsoft word in creating a set of reinforcement and recognition exercises for the students. PowerPoint is ideal for whole-class teaching especially with the aid of a projector. The CD-ROM is very useful in assisting the development of listening and speaking skills. Also, a simulation on CD-ROM to simulate whole-class activities is very paramount.

The Web too is very useful in this regard. A click on a web page may provide numerous links to relevant materials on particular language learning. For informal one-to-one correspondence, e-mail can be used. Feedback from the instructor can be received more quickly than messages sent by mail. Students can read messages at their convenience and easily store them for later reference.

### **Basic Requirements for Language Teachers**

Apart from the generic software like the use of Microsoft Windows operating system and accessories, a word processor, a browser, email software as well as a presentation software, the following are other basic requirements for teachers who intend using ICT to enhance teaching and learning (Davies 2006):

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**i. Evaluation of a CALL Software Package and a Website**

A language teacher is expected to evaluate a Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) which describes the use of the computer in language learning and teaching in its widest possible sense. Many of them are in existence. However, he is expected to be familiar with any of them in order to know how it works.

**ii. Creating an Annotated List of Web Links**

This involves the creation of a checkable list of websites that can be used for reference purposes both for the instructors and the students. Besides, this list too may contain links to other sites that may as well be very useful. A few lines of text may accompany this to describe the websites.

**iii. Accessing a Discussion List**

Members of a language group may share views either among themselves or with others outside their groups usually via electronic discussion lists. This people are usually those with common interest and ideas are exchange in terms of methodology and sometimes curriculum.

**iv. Writing a Lesson Plan**

Just like in the conventional method of teaching, the use of lesson plan is inevitable. This should include, among others, aim of the lesson, hardware resources required, software resources required, preparation, learner's activities during the lesson, links to relevant websites and expected outcomes and follow-up activities.

**Challenges to Using ICT in Language Teaching**

In most developing countries, Nigeria inclusive, there are many hindrances to the use of ICT in teaching and learning. These include:

**i. Education and Skills**

One of the paramount challenges facing the use of ICT in teaching and learning is level of education and acquisition of skills. Using any of the ICT tools require a level of education and skills which majority of our teachers do not have. This may be as a result of the attachment to the traditional method of teaching that they are *contended* with.

**ii. Financial Resources**

No doubt, finance plays a prominent role in determining the availability and use of ICT in any area of endeavour. The case of teaching and learning is not an exception. Most communication facilities cost relatively huge sum of money. The sources of this finance may be from government and other stakeholders in the education industry. For instance, the Nigeria annual budget allocation to education has reduced over the years. No doubt, this reduction does not correlate with the astronomical increment in students' population in our schools.

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iii. **Unavailability of Relevant Software**

Using ICT to enhance teaching and learning sometimes requires the use of computer software especially those developed in line with the curriculum. In Nigeria, these software are not readily available, and when they are, may not be relevant to our curriculum. Customising available ones to our need is usually very expensive since Nigeria lacks software expert to carry this out.

iv. **Access to the Internet**

Access to internet facilities by both the instructor and the students is very poor. When available, the huge cost often impedes this. Virtually all students in our schools and institutions of higher learning do not have relatively free access to the internet. In the country, there are few internet service providers who sometimes frustrate users with their poor services and exploitation.

v. **Lack of Good and Functioning Infrastructure**

ICT requires some other technologies like electricity and telecommunication services to function properly. In Nigeria these services are poorly delivered and this has had adverse effect on the functioning and performances of these ICT tools.

**Prospects**

Despite the fact that the challenges above seem enormous, there are ways of making this technology a thing of household use in Nigeria. There are efforts by various education ‘parastatals’ and government agencies to make the use of ICT in teaching and learning very easy. Firstly, it is now compulsory for all teachers at various levels of our educational system to be computer literate. Some have made the acquisition of basic understanding skills in Information technology especially computer a prerequisite for promotion. This is to encourage interest in learning this. To achieve this, in-house training are often organised and experts in the field are contracted to facilitate the training at little or no cost for the participants.

Agencies like the Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) are making efforts to equip our various institutions of learning with computer systems. Besides, each of these schools now set up local network among these available systems and eventually get hooked to the internet. This is to allow and promote universal access to the Net.

In the area of licensing and tariff policy, government is reducing the cost of this drastically. With this in place, computer and telecommunication equipment now cost less and many people can now afford them. Also, with effort to reduce the fees for telecommunication, ISP and mobile service licences, users will pay less and increase the affordability of such services.

**Conclusion**

The scope for IT-based system of education is limitless, but the effective use to which the technology is put to matters more. Majority of the challenges identified above fall into the category of finance and educational deficiencies in accessing and using ICTs. It now rest on all stakeholders in the education industry to set machinery in place in order to encourage and make ICT available to all for better and enriched curriculum for our learners. This may include earmarking a huge

amount of money for both education and science and Technology in government annual budget allocation. Such fund could be used to purchase needed ICT equipment as well as training of teachers and instructors for a better productivity.

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## **39. Indigenous Languages & Universal Basic Education: Some Challenges**

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The role of indigenous languages in enhancing the educational development of a child cannot be overemphasized. In recognition of this, the Federal Government has entrenched in the National Policy on Education that the medium of instruction in the first three years in the primary school shall be the language of the environment. Also, the policy stipulates that in the Junior Secondary School the language of the environment shall be taught as a core subject where it has orthography and literature. However, if the indigenous language has not been developed, the emphasis shall be on oracy. This paper takes a critical look at this policy and how it can help in the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Scheme. It submits that if the policy is properly implemented, it will assist in the realization of the aims and objectives of the Universal Basic Education Project.

### **Introduction**

Basic Education is the bedrock upon which every other education whether formal, informal or non-formal is built and without it no educational structures erected will have any chances of success. This is the first level of education that children are generally exposed to. The Jomtein Declaration and Framework for Action on Education for All, sees Basic Education as a clear articulation of the formal, non-formal and informal approaches to and the mechanism for awakening an all round development of the human potential.

Nigerian government strongly believes in the power of education in the transformation of the political, economic, technological, scientific and social life of her citizenry as spelt out in the National Policy on Education. This explains why Nigeria has participated in all deliberations concerning Education for All (EFA) since the Jomtein World Conference on Education for All in 1990.

In line with the Plan of Action adopted at Jomtein, Thailand and reaffirmed at a subsequent summit of Heads of Nine High Population Countries (New Delhi, 1993), the Side Summit at Copenhagen (1995) and the Ministerial Review Meeting at Bali, Indonesia, (1995), Nigeria has taken several major initiatives which have greatly influenced and guided activities geared towards Education for All goals (Okoro, 2000). This is in line with the Dakar 2000 Education for All goal of expanding and improving comprehensively early childhood care and education.

For children to develop, it is important not only to meet the basic needs for protection, food and healthcare but also the basic needs for interaction, affection and learning through exploration and discovery. From the viewpoint of education, researches have confirmed the fact that the best medium for teaching a child is through his or her indigenous language, that is, the mother tongue. Bamgbose (1976), Fafunwa (1982), Chumbow (1990), for instance, have shown that a child



learns faster when taught in his or her mother tongue than in a foreign language. Following from the above, it becomes imperative that for the successful implementation of the Universal Basic Education programme, the National Policy on Education which stipulates guidelines for the use of indigenous languages in Pre-primary, Primary and Junior Secondary Schools should be properly addressed. By so doing, the intellectual potentials of the children will be maximized.

### **The Concept of Universal Basic Education (UBE)**

Universal access to free and compulsory education has been the prime target for Nigeria, since the middle of the 1970's when the Universal Primary Education (UPE) Scheme was launched. Incidentally, the programme was initiated during the military era by Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, who later became the democratically elected President of Nigeria. The scheme took off very well but later collapsed because of poor planning, faulty statistics and inadequate funding. The Universal Basic Education was launched on 30th September, 1999 in Sokoto by President Olusegun Obasanjo. It is designed as an improvement on the Universal Primary Education Scheme, which had collapsed.

The UBE is a holistic approach by the government to achieve Education for All by year 2015. The enactment of UBE Commission Act in 2004 and its domestication by the States and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) further emphasizes government commitment to ensure that every Nigerian child has access to quality basic education. The President assented to the UBE Bill on 26th May, 2004 titled "An ACT to Provide for Compulsory, Free, Universal Basic Education and other related matters".

Universal Basic Education is an Education Reform Agenda of government meant to provide compulsory and free education to the children. The legal implication of the UBE Act is the provision of universal, free and compulsory 6 years of primary education and the first 3 years of secondary school. It is initiated with the intent to eliminate distortions in the system with a view to responding to the nation's basic education sub-system to face the challenges of development. Basic Education is the foundation for sustainable life long learning.

The aims of UBE are to equip individuals with such knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to (a) live meaningful and fulfilled lives (b) contribute to the development of the society (c) desire maximum, social, economic and cultural benefits from the society (d) discharge their civil obligations competently. Also, the goals of UBE are to universalize access to basic education, create a conducive learning environment and eradicate illiteracy in Nigeria within the shortest possible time.

The specific objectives of the scheme are:

- (a) To develop in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
- (b) To provide free, compulsory universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school going age.
- (c) To reduce drastically drop-out rate from the formal school system through improved relevance and efficiency.

- (d) To cater for drop-outs and out-of-school children/adolescent through various forms of complimentary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.
- (e) To ensure the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulation and life skills (as well as the ethical, moral and civil values) needed for laying the foundation for life-long learning.

The three components of the UBE scheme are:

- (a) Formal basic education encompassing the first nine years of schooling (primary and junior secondary education) for all children.
- (b) Normadic education for school age children of pastoral nomads and migrant fishermen.
- (c) Literacy and non-formal education for out-of-school children, youths and illiterate adults.

The UBE is still the 6-3-3-4 system of education and not 9-3-4. The only difference is that in addition to primary education, which had been made free and compulsory, the first three years of secondary education has also been made free and compulsory. With regard to the curriculum, new subjects have been introduced, core subjects redefined and the new curriculum has taken account of the target of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), which include value re-orientation, poverty eradication, job creation and wealth generation.

The following subjects have been introduced in the new curriculum: Basic Science, Basic Technology, Information and Communication Technology, Business Studies, Cultural and Creative Arts, French. These subjects, together with other subjects which had already been in the old curriculum, will be spread to cover the 3-level structure as follows: lower level basic education curriculum for primaries 1-3; middle level basic education curriculum for primaries 4-6 and upper level basic education curriculum for JSS 1-3.

### **National Policy on Education – Indigenous Language Provisions**

The importance of language as a means of promoting social interaction, national cohesion and culture preservation has generally been noted. In the light of this, the Federal Government came up with policy statements about the kind of language(s) to be used for passing instruction at the different levels of education. The National Policy on Education, which was first published in 1977, revised in 1981, 1998 and 2004 all contain policy statements about the use of indigenous languages in the education of the child. The 2004 (4th edition) publication, for instance, is quite explicit on this. In section 1, sub-section 10(a) of the policy, we have the following:

Government appreciates the importance of language as a means of promoting social interaction and national cohesion and preserving cultures. Thus, every child shall learn the language of the immediate environment. Furthermore, in the interest of national unity it is expedient

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that every child shall be required to learn one of the three Nigerian languages: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

In section 2, subsection 14(c), the policy in relation to early childhood/pre-primary education indicates that Government shall:

Ensure that the medium of instruction is principally the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community and to this end will:

- (i) Develop the orthography of many more Nigerian languages and
- (ii) Produce textbooks in Nigerian languages.

For primary education, the policy stipulates in section 4, subsection 19(e) and (f) thus:

- (e) The medium of instruction in the primary school shall be the language of the environment for the first three years. During this period, English shall be taught as a subject.
- (f) From the fourth year, English shall progressively be used as a medium of instruction and the language of immediate environment and French shall be taught.

With regard to Secondary Education, the policy states in section 5, subsection 22(d), subsection 24(a) iv, v and subsection 25 (iii) as follows:

- (22d) Secondary education shall develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world cultural heritage.
- (24a) The Junior Secondary School student shall offer
  - (iv) Language of environment to be taught as L<sub>1</sub>.
  - (v) One major Nigerian language other than that of the environment to be taught as L<sub>2</sub>.
- (25iii) The Senior Secondary Student shall offer a major Nigerian language as a core subject.

### **Nigerian Indigenous Languages**

Nigeria is a multilingual country. It is made up of linguistic communities with unique identities, traditions and culture. Language is often used to identify people who belong to different ethno-linguistic settings. An indigenous language is the language of the native people; it is different from a foreign language such as English or French, which is generally learnt as a second language.

The language situation in Nigeria shows that there are very many indigenous languages in the country and the number of these languages is uncertain. According to Unoh (1987:97), "The question of how many Nigerian languages are recognized as languages cannot, as yet, be answered with certainty and finality. Estimates seem to vary ..." Greenberg (1971), for instance, estimates 248 indigenous languages. Hansford et al. (1976) put it at 395 languages, Bamgbose (1978) indicates 513 languages, Elugbe (1990) gives an approximate of 394-400

Nigerian languages, while Urua (2004) records 515 indigenous Nigerian languages. These sources confirm the lack of certainty about the exact number of indigenous Nigerian languages.

Unoh (1987) categorizes these languages into three groups – Group A, Group B, and Group C. According to the source, Group A comprises the three languages that are widely spoken, viz, Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. Group B consists of less widely spoken state or regional languages such as Edo, Efik/Ibibio, Fulfulde, Igala, Ijo, Kanuri, Nupe, Tiv and Urhobo. Group C consists of other Nigerian languages which are spoken by relatively fewer people from small districts, divisions and /or Local Government Areas. The population of the speakers of each of these languages also differs. While the ‘big three’ each has a higher percentage of speakers, the other languages have less number of speakers.

### **The Role of Nigerian Languages in the Implementation of the UBE Project**

The Policy of the mother tongue medium has been a consequence of diligent researches which have provided evidence to the effect that learning is enhanced if the child is taught in the language he has brought from home. Ogenyi (2002:132-133) notes the following as being responsible for the language policy adopted by the government. According to the author, this stems from the recommendation of UNESCO meeting in Paris in 1951 in which the meeting recommended that pupils should begin their education through the medium of the mother tongue, since they have some understanding already in the language. Another UNESCO conference in 1953 in Jos also affirmed that the ideal medium of instruction for a child should be the child’s mother tongue. In 1970, a similar UNESCO conference held in Yaounde, Cameroun reiterated the importance of the mother tongue in the education of the child. The conference notes, for instance, that education will not be effective until primary school education becomes a national extension of the pre-school education received at home and in kindergarten.

Researches have shown that a child learns faster when taught in his or her mother tongue than in a foreign language. Mexico, Philippines, Japan, China, India, Canada, Indonesia, among others are contemporary examples of nations that have developed their indigenous languages. There are other societies that have experimented in developing, codifying and teaching their own indigenous languages with a high level of success. Such language development programmes include the Cree Way Project (Quebec), (1973), The Peach Springs Haulapai Programme (1975), Te Kohanga Reo Programme (Maori in New Zealand), (1982).

In Nigeria, the Ife Six-year Primary project (1970-76) conducted by Obafemi Owolowo University (the former University of Ife) recorded a high success. The project demonstrated that children taught in Yoruba while learning English as a second language did better than those children who learned directly in English. Tsumba (2002) notes a similar literacy programme in Tiv language which was organized by Dutch Reformed Church Mission (DRCM) and later the Church of Christ, locally known as Nongo U Kristu Hen Sudan Hen Tiv. Another Primary Education Improvement Project (PEIP) jointly sponsored by Twelve Northern States, UNESCO and UNICEF was also carried out by Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. In all these experiments, the results showed that literacy in indigenous languages is more effective and more functional than in a foreign language.

The above experiments and discussion point to the importance of indigenous languages in the education of the child. The success of the UBE programme, to a greater extent, will depend on government seriousness in the outright implementation of the language policy provisions. The use of indigenous languages in teaching at the pre-primary, primary and junior secondary school will add to the success of the scheme.

Researches have shown that using the indigenous language as a language of instruction will enhance the academic achievement of the child. If through it other subjects in the school curriculum are taught, the child will understand the lessons better, appreciate what is being taught, form and understand concepts easily and will be able to ask questions where comprehension is not achieved. Olorunselu (1993) notes that the use of the local language as a medium of instruction has positive relationship with the home-background because it makes the child feel very much at home with the lesson being taught in his own language. Since language is a powerful learning tool, the child will not learn fast until he has mastered the language of instruction.

Also, the use of an indigenous language in the education of the child enables the child to acquire at the early stage, self-confidence, initiative, resourcefulness, creative reasoning and adaptability skill necessary for further growth in the later stage of the development of the child. The child's psychomotor, affective and cognitive developments are enhanced through it. The use of indigenous language in the education of the child acts as a means through which the child's attitudes and aptitudes are best developed. Fafunwa (1982) stresses the importance of the use of the mother tongue in the education of the child. According to the author, the use of the mother tongue in education during the formative stage of the child makes the process natural to the child.

The use of the mother tongue in the education of the child enhances continuity in the child's learning process and thus maximizes the child's intellectual development. Chumbow (1990:63-64) citing the UNESCO provision on the efficacy of the mother tongue in the education of the child notes that:

The situation where a child uses one language at home, one that he is intimately related to, psychologically and socio-culturally and has to switch on to a foreign language, a vehicle of foreign culture, psychologically distant from the child, creates a gap between the home and the school.

In school where the child is faced with a different language of instruction, instead of expanding on the knowledge he had already acquired in his mother tongue, he has to begin all over to learn to express himself in the language. This naturally retards the child's cognitive maturation and the development of his capacities. Under this condition, the child's learning ability is slowed down and learning is not optimally achieved. But with the continued use of the mother tongue in school, learning is maximally achieved.

The use of Nigerian languages in school is also a stage in Nigerian children's development and promotion of culture. Language has always been identified with culture. The use of the mother tongue compliments children's acquisition of the language at home and thus helps them to further learn about their environment,



social norms and culture through the language. As a means through which orientation in the cultural environment is made, their non exposure to the use of their native languages in learning may cause them to undermine the efficacy of their native languages and therefore look at a foreign language, for instance, English as a 'superior language'. The effect of this is already seen in our society as most of our children who are early exposed to speaking English always prefer communicating in English than their indigenous languages (if they even know how to speak their indigenous languages). Since language is part of our culture, the children should be taught to cherish, respect, use, appreciate and be proud of their indigenous languages, after all, all languages serve the same purpose, that is, communication. By so doing, the child will get to know more about himself and his environment and he will be psychologically and socio-culturally influenced.

From the above discussions, and from evidences got from research findings on language development projects about the effectiveness of the mother tongue in facilitating the learning process of the child, it is our fervent belief that the mother tongue or indigenous language is fundamental to basic education, which the Universal Basic Education Scheme is meant to provide. If this is properly implemented, the aims of the school curriculum will be achieved.

### **Some Problems and Challenges**

The National Policy on Education contains government good intentions and desires about the position of indigenous languages in the conduct of educational matters at the fundamental level of education in the country. Although indigenous languages have been so recognized by government, there is a general poor handling and implementation of the policy. Besides, some of the provisions in the policy have some political undertones.

It is wrong in principle and practice to identify just three Nigerian languages, which a child should choose from and learn in addition to the mother tongue because of the numerical strength of the speakers of these three languages. What informed the choice of the 'three Nigerian languages: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba' as languages of national unity? Iwara (2003) opines that the status of national language given by government to the three major Nigerian languages, that is, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba offers pedagogical and psychological advantages to pupils from the three major language groups. The implication here is that other Nigerian languages are 'inferior' except these three that have enjoyed government recognition and patronage; therefore using them may not bring about national unity. Government intention in this regard will not be realized because no State where these three languages are not spoken will like to enforce the implementation of the policy.

Also, the expression, 'language of the immediate community' as the medium of instruction at the early childhood/pre-primary and primary levels is open-ended. Eka (2000:29), for instance, poses the question, 'Where does the language of the immediate community begin and where does it stop?' Apart from this, the use of the mother tongue or the language of the immediate environment as a medium of instruction exists only on paper. Government has not indicated how this would be enforced. What operates in reality is the use of English as the medium of instruction, particularly in privately-owned schools. Until the local languages are developed to fulfil their roles, this problem will continue to persist.



The provisions that government will ‘develop the orthography of many more Nigerian languages’ and ‘produce textbooks in Nigerian languages’ seem unrealistic. There are many Nigerian languages that are begging for development. Some of the languages which have had their orthographies developed never got any form of assistance from the Federal Government. The states where each of these languages are spoken generally sponsored the development of such languages. Also, some agencies and linguistic associations assisted in the development of these native languages. The production of textbooks in the local languages suffers the same fate. Federal Government assistance in this area is not felt. Linguistic associations, individuals and the state government have been sponsoring the production of textbooks in these Nigerian languages. All these are challenges to the government to embrace whole-heartedly the task of developing our indigenous languages. Akindele and Adegbite (1999:115) state that “in actual fact, the bane of the non-development of these indigenous languages can be traced to the government’s lackadaisical attitude towards their promotion”.

This non-commitment attitude of government is also noticed in other areas. For instance, most schools have no teaching materials, no indigenous language teachers, and no indigenous language syllabus. In some secondary schools where there are no professionally trained language teachers, teachers who majored in other subjects are assigned the responsibility of teaching the mother tongue as a core subject. This is professionally unethical.

The above discussion is a pointer to the existing problems in the outright implementation of the mother tongue or language of the immediate environment provisions as enshrined in the NPE document and therefore poses some challenges to government and other stakeholders in the realization of the good intentions of the UBE project.

### **Recommendations**

For the UBE programme to succeed, the following recommendations are made:

- (a) Government, NGO’s and other stakeholders in the education industry should assist in providing standard orthography and textbooks in indigenous languages.
- (b) Government should show more commitment in providing money, instructional materials and recruiting of more teachers, for the success of the scheme.
- (c) Since the teacher is the most important of all resources needed to actualize the education of the child, training workshops should be organized on regular basis for the training and retraining of indigenous language teachers.
- (d) A monitoring team should be set up in each state to ensure that the provisions in the policy are religiously followed and defaulting schools sanctioned.
- (e) Enlightenment programmes on the benefits of using the mother tongue in teaching the pupils should be intensified.
- (f) The language policy provision should be amended to make the pupil’s mother tongue the medium of instruction throughout primary education.

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- (g) Department of linguistics and Nigerian languages in Universities and Colleges of Education should be funded and encouraged to step up the production of graduates in Nigerian languages.
  - (h) All languages should be given equal rights to develop and be used without any bias against the three widely spoken languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) as enshrined in the National Policy on Education.
  - (i) National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN), Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), Centres for Nigerian/African Studies, among other research institutes in language related matters should be properly funded to be able to carry out their mandates.
  - (j) The owners of the language should help to promote their language because no matter how well planned the programme may be, no other person or group will project or promote one's native language if it does not come from the speakers of the language themselves.
  - (k) Parents should encourage and motivate their children and wards to speak and be proficient in their native languages.
  - (l) Facilities in schools should be provided and updated to make the school environment conducive for teaching and learning.
  - (m) Teachers should be properly motivated. Teachers welfare should be properly attended to and their salaries paid as at when due. This will help to boost their moral for effective teaching.

**Conclusion**

In this paper, we have examined the Universal Basic Education vis-a-viz the primacy of the mother tongue in the education of the child. The language provisions in the National Policy on Education have stated clearly government's position on the use of the mother tongue in the pre-primary, primary and junior secondary schools. The paper has shown that Education for All cannot be meaningful if the place of the mother tongue in the education of the child is not given its rightful place. The present practice where English is used as a language of instruction at the foundation level in most schools is against the submission of UNESCO and a total disregard to government's position on the use of indigenous languages in schools. Universal Basic Education is a laudable programme of government and therefore all efforts must be made towards making it a success. Both government and other stakeholders in the education industry must show commitment to ensure that the programme succeeds.

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## 40. Phonological Processes and Their Effect on Lexical Tones in Urhobo

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Urhobo is a southwestern Edoid language of the West Benue-Congo branch of the Niger-Congo family (Williamson and Blench 2000). It is widely spoken in Delta State, Nigeria. This paper discusses two phonological processes, vowel elision and glide formation, both of which affect one of two vowels occurring in a sequence. As every syllable in this language is marked by the presence of a vowel, whatever affects a vowel affects a syllable. The result is that these phonological processes convert two syllables in underlying representation into one in the surface realization. Since every vowel and consequently every syllable bears a tone, these processes have implications for the realization of tone in this language. Our focus in this paper is on lexical tones. Our data reveal that the tone borne by a vowel affected by a phonological process may either merge with a neighbouring vowel, get deleted from the string or replaces the tone of a surviving vowel but there is no noticeable effect on the pitch of the surviving tone. The data also reveal that of the three tone pitches, high, downstepped high and low, the high tone takes precedence over the other two and that the higher the tone in a string, the more likely it is to survive.

### 0. Introduction

Both vowel elision (VE) and glide formation (GF) are common phonological processes attested in many languages but their realization is usually governed by language specific constraints. VE involves the omission, deletion or total loss of one of two vowels occurring across a syllable/morpheme/word boundary thereby eliminating the boundary and fusing the morphemes together. VE may affect either  $V_1$  or  $V_2$ . After VE has applied, a sequence such as (1a) would be realized as (1b). (Note:  $V_1$  = the vowel before the boundary; # = morpheme boundary,  $V_2$  = vowel after the boundary.)

1        (a)         $CV_1 \# V_2$         =        1(b) [CV]

GF is also a boundary-eliminating process that turns two syllables in underlying representation into one in the phonetic realization but, in this case, the affected vowel becomes a nonsyllabic glide, i.e., a consonant. GF requires that  $V_1$  must be a high vowel. After GF has applied, a  $CV_1V_2$  sequence gets realized as either [CjV] if  $V_1$  is [+high, +front] or as [CwV] if  $V_1$  is [+high, +back].

Tone refers to pitch differences that are used to differentiate word meanings or to convey grammatical distinctions or both. Tone usually has both lexical and grammatical functions. Lexical tones refer to tones borne by lexical items and are similar in function to consonant and vowel segments such that a change in tone results in a change in the meaning of otherwise homophonous words. For example,

the following Urhobo words are differentiated only by a difference in tonal patterns.

- |    |       |                  |       |            |
|----|-------|------------------|-------|------------|
| 2. | ùkpè  | ‘year’           | úkpè  | ‘bed’      |
|    | ènì   | ‘elephant’       | èní   | ‘head pad’ |
|    | òdìbò | ‘slave, servant’ | ódibó | ‘banana’   |

Grammatical tones, on the other hand, are usually floating tones that get mapped onto specific positions in grammatical constructions and may result in the modification of lexical tones. For instance, in Urhobo tense and aspect are revealed through the manipulation of tones. The tense morpheme is a floating high tone. If the string is in the present tense, this high tone is realized on the final vowel of the subject NP as shown in (3a) while if it is in the past tense, the tone is realized on the final vowel of the verb as in (3b). The question morpheme is a floating low tone that is realized on the final vowel of the affirmative and may result in the formation of a contour tone if the lexical tone in that position is a high tone as in (3c). Generally, no significant modifications take place if the immediately preceding tone is identical with the floating tone. The two may simply collapse into one or there may be a slight lengthening if the two tones are high, or there may be a downglide if both tones are low.

- |     |      |       |      |          |                                   |                            |
|-----|------|-------|------|----------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 3a. | èfè  | (')   | dɛ   | ènì      | [èfě dèní]                        |                            |
|     | name | pres. | buy  | elephant | ‘Efe is buying/buys an elephant’. |                            |
| b.  | èfè  |       | dɛ   | (')      | ènì                               |                            |
|     | name | buy   | past | elephant | ‘Efe bought an elephant’.         |                            |
| c.  | èfè  |       | dɛ   | (')      | úkó                               | (')                        |
|     | Name | buy   | past | cup      | Ques.                             | ‘Did Efe buy a cup?’       |
| d.  | èfè  |       | dɛ   | (')      | ènì                               | (')                        |
|     | name | buy   | past | elephant | Ques.                             | ‘Did Efe buy an elephant?’ |

In this work, our focus is on the behaviour of lexical tones when they are affected by VE or GF.

### 1. Some Basic Facts about Urhobo Sound System

Consonants: There are twenty-eight consonant segments, as follows:

- Plosives: /p, b, t, d, c, ɟ, k, g, kp, gb/  
 Fricatives: /ɸ, f, v, s, z, r, ɾ, ʃ, ʒ, h, ɣ/  
 Nasals: /m, n, ɲ, ŋm/  
 Approximants: /ʋ, j, w/.

Vowels: There are seven phonetic vowels. All Urhobo vowels can be phonetically and inherently nasalized. Urhobo phonetic vowel segments are as follows: / i, e, ɛ, a, ɔ, o, u/ represented in the orthography as: i, e, ẹ, a, ọ, o, u, respectively.

However, based on the behaviour of the vowels, we can recognize nine vowels at the phonological level. This is because the vowels /e/ and /o/ behave sometimes as [-High] vowels and sometimes as [+High] vowels. In (4a), both vowels take a suffix in the formation of the verbal noun, a process typically associated with the high vowels /i/ and /u/. The occurrence of the suffix creates the environment for glide formation so that in the phonetic realization, /e/ and /o/ surface as glides with e, a high front unrounded vowel becoming [j] and o, a high back rounded vowel becoming [w]. This is in contrast with the behavior of these vowels in (4b) in which, because they are [-High] vowels, they do not take a suffix.

4a. [+High] Vowels

|    |         |      |                               |
|----|---------|------|-------------------------------|
| re | ‘eat’   | ɛriɔ | [ɛɾjɔ] ‘(the act of) eating’  |
| co | ‘trade’ | ɛcuɔ | [ɛcwɔ] ‘(the act of) trading’ |
| si | ‘write’ | esio | [esjo] ‘(the act of) writing’ |
| ku | ‘pour’  | ekuo | [ekwo] ‘(the act of) pouring’ |

4b. [-High] Vowels

|    |             |     |                                   |
|----|-------------|-----|-----------------------------------|
| re | ‘finish’    | ere | [ere] ‘(the act of) finishing’    |
| co | ‘steal’     | eco | [eco] ‘(the act of) stealing’     |
| ɣɔ | ‘entertain’ | ɛɣɔ | [ɛɣɔ] ‘(the act of) entertaining’ |
| sa | ‘shoot’     | ɛsa | [ɛsa] ‘(the act of) shooting’     |

Elugbe (1973, 1989) claims that Urhobo, like some other Edoid languages, has a seven-vowel system which has been reduced from a ten-vowel system postulated for Proto-Edoid (PE). The ten vowels postulated for PE are:

|              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| High vowels: | */i, I, U, u/ |
| Mid vowels:  | */e, ɛ, ɔ, o/ |
| Low vowels:  | */ə, a, /     |

Only Degema, a Delta Edoid (DE) language, is known to have contrasts involving all ten vowels. Most of the other Edoid languages have reduced the original system in one of three ways:

- a) in a nine-vowel system, there is no /ə/
- b) in an eight-vowel system, there is no /ə, I/
- c) in a seven-vowel system, there is no /ə, I, U/.

Evidence such as our data provide shows that PE vowels \*/I/ and \*/U/ have merged with /e/ and /o/ respectively in the Urhobo system and although there is absolute neutralization of contrast between e and I and o and U at the phonetic level, the high vowels still retain this feature and it surfaces when the vowels occur in grammatical constructions. Thus, when these two vowels behave as [-High]



vowels, they are actually /e/ and /o/ but when they behave as [+High] vowels, they are reflexes of Proto-Edoid \*/I/ and \*/U/ respectively which are [+High] vowels (see also Donwa- Ifode 1989). The result is that there are two kinds of e and two kinds of o. in Urhobo. We shall not dwell more on this issue as it is beyond the scope of this work. In our examples, we shall give the synchronic forms of segments.

Vowel harmony exists in the language. It is minimally present in the noun class as many nouns do not follow a strict patterning in their segmental make up, although harmony plays a major role in the selection of the plural prefix (see examples (5a-d)). The plural prefix for [+ATR] vowels is [i] (see Ex. 5a-b) while that for [-ATR] vowels is [e] (see Ex. 5c-d).

#### 5. Vowel Harmony in the Noun

|     |          |     |           |
|-----|----------|-----|-----------|
| ùnè | “song”   | ìnè | “songs”   |
| òtù | “group”  | itù | “groups”  |
| ɔsɛ | “father” | ésɛ | “fathers” |
| òtá | “word”   | ètá | “words”   |

Vowel harmony is highly attested in the verbal system as affixes, e.g. subject and object pronouns as well as grammatical particles, almost always occur in two phonological shapes depending on the [ATR] requirements of the verb stem vowel (see examples in (6)).

#### 6. Vowel Harmony in the Verb

|    |         |        |              |                    |                    |
|----|---------|--------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| sè | “read”  | ò sérí | “3sg read”   | ò sé ɔbè [ò sɔbè]  | “3sg read a book”  |
| rè | “eat”   | ɔ réré | “3sg ate”    | ɔ ré èmù [ɔ rjémù] | “3sg ate food”     |
| cò | “steal” | ò córí | “3sg stole”  | ò có ébò [ò cébò]  | “3sg stole a sack” |
| cò | “trade” | ɔ córó | “3sg traded” | ɔ có èkì [Ò cwéki] | “3sg traded”       |

In the examples in (6), note that the third person singular subject pronoun has two phonetic shapes: [o] alternating with [ɛ] depending on the vowel harmony requirement of the verb stem vowel. (For a fuller account of vowel harmony in Urhobo, see Aziza 1994, 1997.)

Table 1 below shows the minimally specified matrix for the nine Urhobo phonological vowels.

Table 1: *Minimally Specified Matrix for Urhobo Phonological Vowels*

|       | i | e (*I) | e | ɛ | a | ɔ | o | o (*U) | u |
|-------|---|--------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|---|
| HIGH  | + | +      | - | - | - | - | - | +      | + |
| FRONT | + | +      | + | + | - | - | - | -      | - |
| BACK  | - | -      | - | - | - | + | + | +      | + |
| ATR   | + | -      | + | - | - | - | + | -      | + |

Urhobo has a terraced level tone system with two basic tones, the low (L) tone and the high (H) tone and a lexical downstepped high tone (!H) which is found only after the high tone in the lexical make up of some nouns and numerals. Contour tones, i.e. combinations of high-low and low-high tones exist but they are actually sequences of the basic tones found mainly in some grammatical constructions. The only class of lexical items that display contour tones in isolation are the unit numerals “two” to “ten” and only in the initial position. Only vowels bear tones in Urhobo; there are no syllabic consonants. (For more on the Urhobo tone system, see Kelly 1969, Welmers 1969, 1973, Elugbe 1973, 1989, Aziza 1997, 2003.)

Since every vowel bears a tone in the underlying representation, these phonological processes have implications for phonetic tonal output. When a vowel undergoes one of these processes, its tone is automatically set afloat and one of three things may happen to it: (a) it may merge with a neighboring tone if both are identical; (b) it may be deleted from the phonetic string; or (c) it may replace a neighboring tone.

VE is a very common phonological process in Urhobo and it applies in both slow deliberate speech and in normal conversational speech. It affects either of two vowels occurring on either side of a morpheme boundary making them to be realized as one word. In any utterance, a number of vowels may be elided but this is done in a systematic way, based on morpho-syntactic considerations, so that communication is sustained. In this language, all syllables are open and all lexical items except verbs and adverbs begin with a vowel. This means that at morpheme/word boundaries, vowel sequences usually occur but since they are prohibited at surface level, VE may be employed to repair the deviant structure. VE takes place if V<sub>1</sub> is [-high] and it may affect either V<sub>1</sub> or V<sub>2</sub> based on the morpho-syntactic relations existing between the lexical items that make up the sequence. A grammatically functional vowel would normally be retained while a grammatically vacuous vowel would be elided. In the examples in (7), the vowel before the boundary, V<sub>1</sub>, is elided, an indication that it is grammatically vacuous in that position.

7. V<sub>1</sub> elision  
a.  $d\grave{o} + \acute{u}k\acute{o} = d\emptyset \acute{u}k\acute{o} = [d\acute{u}k\acute{o}]$   
throw cup 'throw a cup'

---

|    |                 |   |               |   |                    |
|----|-----------------|---|---------------|---|--------------------|
| b. | cèrè + ɔnɛ      | = | cèrØ ɔnɛ      | = | [cèrɔnɛ]           |
|    | cook yam        |   |               |   | 'cook yam'         |
| c. | àḡmá + ɔfúáfo   | = | àḡmØ ɔfúáfo   | = | [àḡmɔfúáfo]        |
|    | cloth white     |   |               |   | 'a white cloth'    |
| d. | ɔmɔtɛ + ójójóvì | = | ɔmɔtØ ójójóvì | = | [ɔmɔtójójóvì]      |
|    | girl beautiful  |   |               |   | 'a beautiful girl' |
| e. | íkó + ɛnè       | = | íkØ ɛnè       | = | [íkɛnè]            |
|    | cups four       |   |               |   | 'four cups'        |
| f. | àbɔ + ivɛ       | = | àbØ ivɛ       | = | abivɛ]             |
|    | Hands two       |   |               |   | 'two hands/twice'  |
| g. | ɔnàná + ɔmɔtɛ   | = | ɔnànØ ɔmɔtɛ   | = | [ɔnànɔmɔtɛ]        |
|    | this one girl   |   |               |   | 'this is a girl'   |
| h. | ɔjèná + ɛvɛ     | = | ɔjènØ ɛvɛ     | = | [ɔjènɛvɛ]          |
|    | that one goat   |   |               |   | 'that is a goat'   |

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In the examples in (8), it is the vowel after the boundary, i.e. V<sub>2</sub>, that is elided.

8. V<sub>2</sub> elision

|    |                 |   |           |   |              |
|----|-----------------|---|-----------|---|--------------|
| a. | úkó + ɔjèná     | = | úkó Øjèná | = | [úkó jèná]   |
|    | cup that one    |   |           |   | 'that cup'   |
| b. | íkó + èjèná     | = | íkó Øjèná | = | [íkó jèná]   |
|    | cups those ones |   |           |   | 'those cups' |
| c. | éwu + ɔmɛ       | = | éwu Ømɛ   | = | [éwu mɛ]     |
|    | dress mine      |   |           |   | 'my dress'   |
| d. | íwu + èmɛ       | = | íwu Ømɛ   | = | [íwu mɛ]     |
|    | dressess mine   |   |           |   | 'my dresses' |
| e. | íḡo + ɔwɛ       | = | íḡo Øwɛ   | = | [íḡo wɛ]     |
|    | money yours     |   |           |   | 'your money' |

An examination of (7) and (8) shows that morpho-syntactic constraints play a key role in determining which vowel gets elided from a string and which one is retained. In (7), the prefix vowels of nouns, adjectives<sup>1</sup> and numerals because they are grammatically relevant: for nouns and adjectives, they indicate number alternations, but the final vowels of nouns, verbs and demonstratives get elided because they are grammatically vacuous. On the other hand, in (8), the final vowel of the noun is retained while the prefix vowel of the demonstrative and possessive pronoun is deleted because it occurs immediately preceded by its headnoun and so, even though it also marks number concord, its function is redundant and it is elided.

We have chosen VE to account for the process outlined above rather than assimilation and contraction which have been used to explain similar occurrences in languages like Isoko (Donwa 1982, Yul-Ifode 1999) and Emai (Egbokhare

1990) for two main reasons: unlike in these other Edoid languages, in Urhobo, there is no intermediate assimilatory stage that is acceptable as an alternative pronunciation even in slow speech and also there is no perceivable increase in length in the vowels that result after VE.

However, VE is blocked if V<sub>1</sub> is either a high front or a high back vowel. In that case, V<sub>1</sub> obligatorily undergoes glide formation. This is the subject of the next section.

### 3. Glide Formation (GF)

Unlike VE which may affect either V<sub>1</sub> or V<sub>2</sub>, GF affects only V<sub>1</sub>. Also unlike VE that affects vowels across a morpheme boundary, GF affects V<sub>1</sub> in a sequence that may be within or across a morpheme/word boundary. After GF has applied, a [+high, +front] vowel is realized as the palatal approximant, [j], while a [+high, +back] vowel gets realized as the labial-velar approximant, [w].

Within a morpheme/word boundary the conditions for GF to occur are as follows:

- i) V<sub>1</sub> must be a [+high] vowel, front or back while V<sub>2</sub> must be a non-identical vowel.
- ii) The vowel sequence must be preceded by a consonant, that is, the high vowel must occur in the frame C-V, e.g.:

9. GF within morpheme boundary:

|    |         |   |           |              |
|----|---------|---|-----------|--------------|
| a. | òviè    | = | [òvjè]    | ‘king’       |
| b. | bìèbí   | = | [bjèbí]   | ‘blackish’   |
| c. | útíε    | = | [útjε]    | ‘orange’     |
| d. | óviε    | = | [óviε]    | ‘cry (noun)’ |
| e. | úsìàϕrε | = | [úsjàϕrε] | ‘key’        |
| f. | ofia    | = | [ofja]    | ‘a lie’      |
| g. | gùègùè  | = | [gwègwè]  | ‘frighten’   |
| h. | ùbùè    | = | [ùbwè]    | ‘dust’       |
| i. | áyúá    | = | [áywá]    | ‘bush/farm’  |
| j. | fùàfo   | = | [fwàfo]   | ‘whitish’    |
| k. | ékúákùà | = | [ékwákwà] | ‘property’   |

Across a morpheme/word boundary, the following are the conditions must be met:

- (i) V<sub>1</sub> must be a [+high] vowel, while V<sub>2</sub> may be any vowel, identical or non-identical. In some languages, e.g. Emai (Egbokhare, 1990), it is obligatory that V<sub>1</sub> and V<sub>2</sub> are non-identical but in Urhobo this condition does not apply in an across morpheme/word boundary sequence. Only V<sub>1</sub> is required to be a [+high] vowel, e.g.:

|     |    |             |   |                 |
|-----|----|-------------|---|-----------------|
| 10. | a. | mì + àηmá   | = | [mjàηmá]        |
|     |    | wring cloth |   | ‘wring a cloth’ |
|     | b. | fì + íγo    | = | [fjíγo]         |
|     |    | throw money |   | ‘spray money’   |

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|    |                                                      |   |                                           |
|----|------------------------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------------|
| c. | úbi + àɣa<br>seed broom                              | = | [úbjaɣa]<br>‘a broom stick’               |
| d. | òɣríkì + ɔ́jájà<br>tamarisk dry<br>(a type of plant) | = | [òɣríkɔ́jájà]<br>‘dried tamarisk’         |
| e. | mù + èràvè<br>carry animal/meat                      | = | [mwèràvè]<br>‘take meat/ carry an animal’ |
| f. | kù + ùdì<br>pour drink                               | = | [kwùdì]<br>‘pour (a) drink’               |
| g. | údu + ɔ́gága<br>heart strong                         | = | [údwɔ́gága]<br>‘stubborn’                 |
| h. | rè + ɔ́kà<br>eat corn                                | = | [rjɔ́kà]<br>‘eat corn’                    |
| i. | se + ɛsè<br>reject gift                              | = | [sjɛsè]<br>‘reject a gift’                |
| j. | ɔ́fàrè + ójójóvì<br>man fine                         | = | [ɔ́fàrjójóvì]<br>‘a handsome man’         |
| k. | sò + ùnè<br>sing song                                | = | [swùnè]<br>‘sing a song’                  |
| l. | tò + àtó<br>chew chewing stick                       | = | [twàtó]<br>‘chew a chewing stick’         |
| m. | ɛto + égba<br>hair jaw                               | = | [ɛtwégba]<br>‘beard’                      |

Note that in (10h-m), the vowels [e] and [o] occurring as V<sub>1</sub> are [+high] and so undergo GF.

- (ii) If V<sub>1</sub> is in a verb, the syllable structure of such a verb must be CV and not CrV or CVCV, and if it is in a noun, the syllable structure of the noun must not be CrV, otherwise, even if V<sub>1</sub> is [+high], VE takes place instead. In the examples in (11) below, verbs within CrV and CVCV syllables (i.e. 11b and 11c respectively) undergo VE rather than GF. That monosyllabic verbs with a CrV structure behave here like disyllabic verbs may be evidence in support of Elugbe’s (1973, 1989) claim that the CrV syllable in Urhobo is historically a disyllabic CV<sub>1</sub>CV<sub>2</sub> structure in which V<sub>1</sub> being identical with V<sub>2</sub> and separated by a liquid was elided. More information would be needed to substantiate this claim.

- 11a. V<sub>1</sub> in CV syllable
- |              |   |                |
|--------------|---|----------------|
| mù + írìbó   | = | [mwìrìbó]      |
| carry pepper |   | ‘carry pepper’ |
| sì + ɛto     | = | [sjɛto]        |
| pull hair    |   | ‘pull hair’    |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |   |                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| èkì + ɔ́rúárò                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | = | [èkjɔ́rwárò]           |
| market big                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |   | ‘a big market’         |
| ògbú + ɔ̀vò                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | = | [ògbwɔ̀vò]             |
| assassin one                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |   | ‘a/one black assassin’ |
| 11b. V <sub>1</sub> in CrV syllable                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |   |                        |
| brù + ìrìbó                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | = | [brìrìbó]              |
| cut pepper                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |   | ‘cut pepper’           |
| krì + úko                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | = | [krúko]                |
| be late back                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |   | ‘be late’              |
| ekru + ɔ́rúárò                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | = | [èkrɔ́rwárò]           |
| family big                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |   | ‘a large family’       |
| ògbru + ɔ̀vò                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | = | [ògbrɔ̀vò]             |
| male garment one                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |   | ‘a/one male garment’   |
| 11c. V <sub>1</sub> in CVCV syllable                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |   |                        |
| dùvu + ìrìbó                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | = | [dùvìrìbó]             |
| pound pepper                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |   | ‘pound pepper’         |
| vìri + ɛto                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | = | [vìrɛto]               |
| break hair                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |   | ‘break hair’           |
| (iii) V <sub>2</sub> must be grammatically functional, for even though conditions (i) and/or (ii) may have been met, the process may be blocked if V <sub>2</sub> is grammatically vacuous. In such a case, V <sub>2</sub> is usually elided. In (12a, b), V <sub>2</sub> is grammatically functional because it is part of the numeral and so it is retained, creating the environment for GF to take place. In (12c, d), V <sub>2</sub> is a prefix vowel that indicates number alternations; such a function is redundant in this structure because the possessive or demonstrative immediately follows its headnoun which has already performed this function. Since V <sub>2</sub> is grammatically vacuous, it is elided. |   |                        |
| 12. a. èvu + ɔ̀vò                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | = | [èvwɔ̀vò]              |
| stomach one                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |   | ‘oneness’              |
| b. ìsì + ɛ̀rhà                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | = | [ìsjɛ̀rhà]             |
| pigs three                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |   | ‘three pigs’           |
| c. èvu + ɔ̀mɛ                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | = | [èvu mɛ]               |
| stomach mine                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |   | ‘my stomach’           |
| d. ìsì + ènà̀nà                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | = | [ìsì nà̀nà]            |
| pigs these ones                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | = | ‘these pigs’           |

From the evidence presented above, it is obvious that syllable/morpheme structure and grammatical function play significant roles in both VE and GF, both of which affect tone-bearing units.



#### 4. Effect of VE and GF on the Realization of Lexical Tones

When VE and GF apply the tones borne by the affected vowels are automatically set afloat. Within the standard theory, a floating tone is described as a segment specified only for tone, which at some point in the derivation, merges with some vowel and passes on its tone to that vowel. However, in autosegmental theory, floating tones are regarded as “melodic levels that map onto the syllabic structure”; their occurrence is predicted in the phonological representation on autosegmental grounds (Goldsmith 1976: 45).

In this language, nouns, adjectives, numerals, demonstratives, possessive pronouns and disyllabic personal pronouns bear lexical tones. As the examples in (2) reproduced here as (13) show, nouns may be differentiated on the basis of difference in tone patterning:

- |     |       |                  |       |            |
|-----|-------|------------------|-------|------------|
| 13. | ùkpè  | ‘year’           | ùkpè  | ‘bed’      |
|     | èní   | ‘elephant’       | èní   | ‘head pad’ |
|     | òdìbò | ‘slave, servant’ | ódìbó | ‘banana’   |

However, verbs and monosyllabic personal pronouns cannot be so differentiated; there are no minimal pairs in the verb class that differ in meaning only as a result of a difference in tone like we have with the noun class. All verbs and monosyllabic personal pronouns bear only low tones in isolation. However, in grammatical sequences, they are assigned tones to reflect the grammatical construction. As a result, all verbs with the same syllable structure and all monosyllabic personal pronouns will surface with the same tone pattern in a particular grammatical construction.

Tonal modifications commonly affect only immediately following or immediately preceding tones. As mentioned earlier, there are three tone levels: the low, the high and the downstepped high. Our data reveal that the higher the tone the more dominant it is and the more likely it is to survive in place of a lower tone. When VE or GF affects a vowel segment, the tone it bears may undergo one of three tonological processes: (a) it may merge with a neighboring tone if both are identical; (b) it may be deleted from the phonetic string; (c) it may replace a neighboring tone.

##### 4.1 Floating Tone Merges With Neighbouring Identical Vowel

The floating tone that results from VE or GF may merge with the neighboring tone with no perceivable difference in pitch or length of the tone. Examples are in (14).

- |     |    |                |   |              |                 |
|-----|----|----------------|---|--------------|-----------------|
| 14. | a. | útíε           | = | [útjε]       | ‘orange’        |
|     | b. | ùbùe           | = | [ùbwe]       | ‘dust’          |
|     | c. | mù + ìríbó     | = | [mwìríbó]    | ‘carry pepper’  |
|     | d. | ìsì + ènàná    | = | [ìsinàná]    | ‘these pigs’    |
|     | e. | àŋmá + ɔ́fúáfo | = | [àŋmɔ́fwáfo] | ‘a white cloth’ |

##### 4.2 Floating Tone Deletes

If the floating tone is non-identical with the neighboring tone, it may get deleted from the phonetic string. In this case, the lower the tone, the more likely it is to get deleted first from the string. It is interesting to note here that the coalescing of a

high tone and a low tone does not produce a downstep in Urhobo as one would find in the tone systems of languages such as Edo (Amayo 1976), Ghotuo (Elugbe 1985), Emai (Egbokhare 1990), all of which are also Edoid languages. What we find instead is that a low tone or a downstepped high tone in the immediate environment of a high tone deletes and leaves no effect on the high tone.

- |     |    |                   |   |                    |
|-----|----|-------------------|---|--------------------|
| 15. | a. | ɔmɔtɛ + ójójàvi   | = | [ɔmɔtójójàvi]      |
|     |    | Girl beautiful    |   | 'a beautiful girl' |
|     | b. | ékpù + ótèté      | = | [ékpwótèté]        |
|     |    | bag small         |   | 'a small bag'      |
|     | c. | íḡo + óbúébu      | = | [íḡóbwébu]         |
|     |    | money plenty      |   | 'plenty of money'  |
|     | d. | egɔ + eḡaḡare     | = | [egeḡaḡare]        |
|     |    | in-laws expensive |   | 'precious in-laws' |
|     | e. | àḡa + ɔròdè       | = | [àḡaròdè]          |
|     |    | broom big         |   | 'a big broom'      |
|     | f. | egɔ + iride       | = | [egɔride]          |
|     |    | bottles big       |   | 'big bottles'      |

From the examples in (15), we can summarize the phonetic tonal outputs after VE or GF has applied as follows:

- |       |        |   |     |                  |
|-------|--------|---|-----|------------------|
| (i)   | L + H  | = | [H] | (as in (15a, b)) |
| (ii)  | !H + H | = | [H] | (as in (15c,d))  |
| (iii) | H + L  | = | [H] | (as in (15e,f))  |

In example (16) below, we notice an interesting phenomenon.

- |     |                |   |          |   |                     |
|-----|----------------|---|----------|---|---------------------|
| 16. | ɔsɛ + rɛ + èɟɔ | = | ɔsɛ rɛɟɔ | = | [ɔséɟɔ]             |
|     | father AM juju |   |          |   | 'juju chief priest' |

This is a typical Noun + Noun phrase in Urhobo. We have deliberately left out the noun + noun constructions because a high toned associative marker (AM) /rɛ/ occurs between the two nouns so that the nouns do not follow each other directly. The vowel of AM is always deleted in speech but its tone remains and relinks onto the following vowel and merges with it if both are identical or replaces it if the following tone is a low. In (16), we have a sequence of !H+H+L collapsing into just a single H tone. Both the downstepped high tone and the low tone on both sides of the high of the associative marker get deleted from the phonetic string and yet the surviving high tone does not get lowered. In many tone systems, such a situation would have resulted in the high tone being realized as a downstep. The evidence from Urhobo raises questions about the claim that the downstep is traceable to a lost low tone and supports instead the recognition of a phonemic status for the phenomenon, at least in some languages.

### 4.3 Floating Tone Relinks

If the floating tone is high and the immediately preceding or following tone is low, the high tone replaces the low tone. The numeral system presents an interesting situation tonologically. Of the units “One” to “Ten”, only [ɔvò] ‘One’, has a L-L tone pattern; all others, i.e., ‘Two’ to ‘Ten’ have an initial LH tone sequence and they are the only lexical items that bear a tone sequence in isolation in this language. In fast speech, the LH sequence is often simplified to H. (For a fuller account of the Noun + Numeral construction in Urhobo, see Aziza (2003)). The units are listed below:

|     |       |         |       |         |
|-----|-------|---------|-------|---------|
| 17. | ɔvo   | ‘one’   | esa   | ‘six’   |
|     | ivɛ   | ‘two’   | iɣwɛ  | ‘seven’ |
|     | era   | ‘three’ | ɛɛɛɛ  | ‘eight’ |
|     | ɛne   | ‘four’  | iriri | ‘nine’  |
|     | ijori | ‘five’  | ihwe  | ‘ten’   |

In a modifier + noun phrase, the modifier follows the noun and it is the final vowel of the noun that gets elided. The following tonal modifications are identified in the noun + numeral phrase:

|     |    |                   |   |                                    |
|-----|----|-------------------|---|------------------------------------|
|     | a) | L + L             | = | L (as in 18a-b)                    |
|     | b) | L + LH            | = | LH (as in 18c-d)                   |
|     | c) | !H + L(H)         | = | !H (as in 18e-f)                   |
|     | d) | H + L(H)          | = | H (as in 18g-h)                    |
| 18. | a  | ùwɛvì + ɔvò       | = | [ùwɛvɔvò] ‘one/a house’            |
|     | b. | àsɔ + ɔvò         | = | [àsɔvò] ‘one/a night’              |
|     | c. | íkɛ̀ + ɣ̀jòrì     | = | [íkɛ̀jòrì] ‘five beds’             |
|     | d. | ìwè̀vì + ɛ̀ɛ̀ɛ̀ɛ̀ | = | [ìwè̀vɛ̀ɛ̀ɛ̀ɛ̀] ‘eight houses’     |
|     | e. | ɔsɛ + ɔvò         | = | [ɔsɔvò] ‘one/a father’             |
|     | f. | étɔ + ɪ́riri      | = | [étɪ́riri] ‘nine parcels of land.’ |
|     | g. | úkó + ɔvò         | = | [úkɔvò] ‘one/a cup’                |
|     | h. | íkó + ɛ̀nè        | = | [íkɛ̀nè] ‘four cups’               |

From the data presented, it is obvious that of the three tone levels borne by lexical items in the language, the high tone is the most dominant and can cause the others to delete when they occur in the same environment with no effect on its pitch. Although there is downdrift, the low tone and the downstepped high tone can only lower a high tone if it is present in the phonetic string. Where they get deleted before surface structure, they have no effect on the pitch of a surviving high tone.

### 5. Summary and Conclusion

We have shown in this paper that sequences of vowels are not permitted at surface level in Urhobo and where they occur in the underlying representation, one of the

vowels obligatorily undergoes either VE or GF depending on the type of vowel segment and its function in the string. Since all vowels bear tone, when a vowel undergoes one of these phonological processes, its tone is set afloat. The floating tone may merge with the tone of the surviving vowel if they are identical, get deleted if it is the lower tone or replace a lower tone if it is the higher one. The study has shown that phonological processes also have tonal implications which must be taken into consideration when writing the language. .

### Abbreviations and Conventions

The following abbreviations have been used in our examples:

|       |   |                                                                                                   |
|-------|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AM    | = | associative marker used to join two nouns or nominals in a Noun + Noun or Noun + Modifier phrase. |
| [ATR] | = | Advanced Tongue Root.                                                                             |
| 1sg   | = | first person singular pronoun                                                                     |
| 2sg   | = | second person singular pronoun                                                                    |
| 3sg   | = | third person singular pronoun, etc.                                                               |

Tones have been marked on vowel segments as follows: the low tone as [ˊ], the high tone as [ˋ] while the downstepped high tone is left unmarked. Floating tones are enclosed within brackets before they get realized.

Significantly nasalized vowels are marked by placing [̃] on the vowel. Phonetic nasalization affects all vowels occurring after nasal consonants and are not marked.

### Note

1. Most adjectives in Urhobo are actually nouns that function as modifiers

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# 41. Structural Tone in Igbo: Evidence from Mgbidi

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Tone, as a suprasegmental feature of language, has been profoundly studied in phonology often with little attention paid to how it occurs in other levels of linguistics, such as syntax. Recently, revolutionary discoveries in languages have shown that tone can also play a part in the systematic structuring of a given language. This paper is a contribution from Mgbidi, dialect of Igbo, in furtherance of the process of describing tone as part of syntactic structure of a tone language.

## **Introduction**

Over the years study of tone in languages under phonology has been taken as given since it is normally considered as a suprasegmental feature of language. By this suprasegmental attachment it was, together with such other components as accent, stress, intonation, and etc, defined in phonology since it has no physical entity represented in the linear formation of linguistic units as the segmental counterparts. Rather its effect is felt as being superimposed on the linearly formed segmental syllables.

With more in-depth studies in varying languages that employ tone, questions began to emerge as to the real nature and status of these linguistic features and especially as they relate to their appropriate domains of operations. The titular depiction of this in such works as Loup (1984), “Is there a Structural Foreign Accent” -...” is a testimony to this. In answers to such inquiry large volume of empirical studies have revealed that tone is fundamental to syntactic ‘pruning and phrase marking’ (Mbah, 2004) in such languages that employ it. Such fundamental studies as Mbah (2004) and Akinremi (2004) have x-rayed the syntactic structure to be underlain by tonal properties.

## **Theoretical Framework for Tone as a Superstructure of Igbo Constructions**

Mbah (2004) depicts tone as part of the skeletal structure of the syntactic phrase structure of Igbo. Being a constituent of the Inflectional phrase (IP) tone stands in a government relationship with the subject of the sentence and C-commands it. Thus, the form of the construction depends on the type of tone heading the COMP (C) because transformation at the tonal level precedes those at the segmental tier following the structural condition imposed by the principle of C-command (Mbah, 2004). Thus, tone is important the realization of the following constructions:

- Interrogation – subject with Low tone
- Declarative – subject with High tone
- Negative – Neg, head with Step tone
- Past Tense formation – Low tone



Mbah (2004) states that tone has scopal property over such suffixes as associated with their varying grammatical forms, as they do not have their own inherent tone pattern until acquired at their grammatical positions. Other lexical items generated at the base have inherent tones and do retain them until the morphophonemic stages where through relevant changes they adopt to the structures imposed by C", thus yielding the appropriate pronunciation of the grammatical sentence.

Akinremi (2004) extends NFL analysis of tone to the treatment of Yes/No question in Igbo. To her, the pronominal following the subject NP in Yes/No question is associated with the grammatical characterization of interrogative in Igbo, though sharing agreement features of person and Number with the subject NPs. She sees such phonetic realization as a grammatical requirement (namely the need for a host for tonal affix) given the fact that the entity merely encodes the grammatical agreement of person, Number, etc. Thus the grammatical low tone in Igbo interrogative is a tonal affix generated in the COMP, which the effect of strong COMP has compelled to be realized as a tonal affix requiring a host.

This host appears as a phonetically realized AGR element of a finite I (the so-called resumptive pronoun) or the Spec, - IP element (where the subject is a pronoun) left of the verb.

Such studies go to discard the old beaten heuristic statements usually made on the syntactic functions at the end of every phonological description of tone. What Mbah (2004) and Akinremi (2004) describe is the status of tone in the general architectural layout of Igbo Language. However, in Mgbidi Igbo tone is further integrated into the morpho-syntactic spell-out of its constructions.

### **Tones Rules in Mgbidi Words**

Emenanjo (1978), Nwachukwu (1976, 1995) and Mbah and Mbah (2000) give an exhaustive list of tone rules and patterns in Igbo nominal constructions which aptly represent what obtains in Mgbidi. Nevertheless, this section highlights the basic tonal characteristics of two lexical classes in Mgbidi relevant to this study – the noun and the verb – before the syntactic manifestation. Nwachukwu (1995) gives six tonal classes of Igbo noun as follows:

Tone Class (TCL1) H,<sup>1</sup>

Examples:

jí “yam”      dí “husband”      nwa “child”

Tone Class (TCLII) HH,

Examples:

ńkwú “oil palm”      ńkú “fire wood”      ágwọ “snake”      éhi “cow”

Tone Class III (TCLIII) HS,

Examples:

égó “money”      ánwú “sun”      ígwé “sky”

Tone Class IV (TCLIV) LH,

Examples:

ùkwé “song”      àkwá “egg”      àhú “body”

Tone Class V (TCLV) HL,

Examples:

ògù “hoe”      égwù “fear”      ógù “justice”      ákwà “cloth”

Tone Class VI (TCLVI) LL

Example:

àla “land”      àgwa “character”      ìte “pot”      ákwa “bed”

The six-tone patterns group into two broad classes according to the tone of the last syllable:

Group 1:

Tone Class I H

Tone Class 2 HH

Tone Class 3 HS

Tone Class 4 LH

Group 1 has high tone endings.

Group 2:

Tone Class 4 HL

Tone Class 5 LL

The final tones of members of the group are low.

Nwachukwu (1995) gives the following pattern for verbs, which fall under three broad classes:

Tone class 1 (TCL1) H

Example, Citation Root Gloss

ígbú < -gbú kill      írí < -rí eat      íchú < -chú chase

Tone class 2 (TCL2)

íjé < -jé go      íkwú < -kwú say      ínyé < -nyé give

íkù < -ku knock

Tone Class 3 (TCL3)

ídà < -dà fall      ítò < -tò praise

íkwà < -kwà beat (drum)      ínyà < -nyà ride

Nwachukwu (1995) describes tone class 2 verbs as obnoxious because while other two classes maintain stable high and low tones in that order in nearly all forms, it deceptively behaves as high tone in its citation while elsewhere it becomes a low tone verb, thus attracting the term “high low” tone (HL-tone). The same characteristics are exhibited by the same sets in Mgbidi.

## **2. Tonal Syntax in Mgbidi**

In carrying out this study as part of a larger investigation, the researcher elicited tokens from three Mgbidi adults, two males and a female. The focus was on the tonal alternations on such structures in realizing syntactic structures. Relying on introspection the researcher compared the structures with corresponding structures in standard Igbo.

The following structures were eventually isolated as tonally determined syntactic construction of the dialect:

- constructions with object ellipsis;
- the habitual aspect;
- the future aspect;
- the perfective negative construction; and
- some question constructions.

The morpho-syntactic features the tone displays in these constructions are discussed below.

### **2.1 Constructions with object ellipsis**

The normal everyday use of language is not only made of utterances describable in terms of formal sentential syntax and semantics. Rather, as Brown and Yule (1983) note, the purpose and function which such forms are designated to serve in what has been called the functional analysis has to be equally considered. Thus, the formal transitive sentence ends with the noun object or verb complement. Such present or past indicative constructions in Mgbidi are indicated by low tones on the verbal complex as in

|                     |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| H L L H             |              |
| Ó-rìrì jí           | ‘he ate yam’ |
| 3sgsp eat rvpst yam |              |

|                    |                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| H L L L H H        |                          |
| Ézè galụ áβye      | ‘Eze went to the market’ |
| Nm go rvpst market |                          |

However, this tonal pattern of all low in the past verb form changes in constructions with object ellipsis frequently encountered in discourse. These are sentences whose object nouns are either elided or filled by their referential

pronouns called slot-fillers in discourse. Such constructions in Mgbidi are used for emphatic confirmation of events or of (one's) action(s) especially when the addressee is perceived to be in doubt. The verbal complex is raised to high tones, which also affects the slot-filler.

Examples:

- |     |                         |                       |
|-----|-------------------------|-----------------------|
|     | H S Level               |                       |
| 1a) | Ó-ríri                  | He ate.               |
|     | 3sgsp eat rv pst        |                       |
|     | H S Level               |                       |
| (b) | Ó-mélú                  | It happened           |
|     | 3sgsp do rv pst         |                       |
|     | H H H S Level           |                       |
| (c) | Ngọzi gálú              | Ngozi went.           |
|     | Nm go rv pst            |                       |
|     | L L H H                 |                       |
| (d) | ùdu wálu                | The earthen pot broke |
|     | Nm break rv pst         |                       |
|     | H S Level               |                       |
| (e) | Ó-riíi yé               | He ate it.            |
|     | 3sgsp eat rv pst 3 sgop |                       |
|     | L L H H S               |                       |
| (f) | òke kpólu yé            | Oke called him.       |
|     | Nm call rv pst 3sgsop   |                       |

Examples 1 (a-d) show elliptical sequences, where the object complements are omitted, while the sentences are still interpretable. Examples 1, (e and f) have the referential pronouns of the omitted object complements filling the position.

## 2.2 The Past Habitual Aspect

Mgbidi marks the past habitual aspect by a sentence of the frequentative auxiliary-*du* and the *na*-progressive marker prefixed in that order to the verb as in the following:

- |      |                                    |                            |
|------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
|      | H L H L H Levels                   |                            |
| 2(a) | Ó-dù nà-abie ẹkwúkwo               | He used to come to school. |
|      | 3sgsp frqm.prgaux.v-pr.come school |                            |
|      | H L H H S Levels                   |                            |
| (b)  | Ó dù nà-ahú uya                    | He used to lie.            |
|      | 3sgs frqm.prgaux.v-pr.blow lie     |                            |

- H L L H L H H Level  
 (c) Ézè dù nà-èzù ohi Eze used to steal.  
 Nm frqm.prgaux.v-pr-steal vcv

The phonetic form vcv in the morpheme gloss of example (c) is a dummy deriving its meaning from the preceding inherent verb in the famous Inherent Complement Verb system of Igbo (see Nwachukwu, 1988).

The tonal alternation involves inherent low tone of the progressive auxiliary being raised to high. The normal progressive marker in Mgbidi construction has low tone as follows:

- H L H H S Level  
 Ọ na-áhụ ụya He is lying  
 3sgsp. Prgaux.v-p. blow lie

### 2.3 The Future Aspect

Mgbidi marks the future aspect with the low tone *na* auxiliary followed by a bound auxiliary complement vcv on a high tone. The whole verbal complex assumes the high tone of the open vowel prefix as in:

- H L L H H H Level  
 3(a) Ọgù ná-ága aḽie Ogu will go to the market  
 Nm Futaux. V-pr.go market
- H L H H S  
 (b) Ọ-nà-éri ji He will eat yam  
 3sgsp.Futaux.v-pr.eat yam
- H L H H S Level  
 (c) Ọ-nà-ékpe ékpere He will pray  
 3sgsp.Futaux.v-pr.pray prayer

In the above examples the behaviour of tones of the open vowel prefix together with the *na* future auxiliary is fundamental to the realization of the future aspect. The tone pattern is altered depending on the tone group of the verb root. If the verb root is low tone the vowel is equally low while if it is high the vowel prefix is high. It is to be noted that Mgbidi does not employ the conventional Igbo “*ga*” in marking future aspect.

### 4. The Perfective Negative

The perfective negative is formed in Mgbidi by both morphological and tonal permutation of the basic declarative sentence as follows:

*Affirmative Sentence/Negative sentence*

- |      |                                        |                                         |
|------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
|      | L H H H H S /                          | L H H L H H H S                         |
| 4(a) | Òbí ekwugwo okwú /                     | Òbí àkà kwúβo okwu                      |
|      | Nm.v-pr.say perf.word                  | Nm.perf.negaux.saynegaux.word           |
|      | Obi has spoken / Obi has not spoken    |                                         |
|      |                                        |                                         |
|      | H L L H H H S H /                      | L H L H H H S                           |
| (b)  | Úché ekwúgwo okwú/                     | Úché àkà kwúβo okwu                     |
|      | Nm.v-pr.say word                       | Nm.perf.neg.aux.say negaux word         |
|      | Uche has spoken / Uche has not spoken. |                                         |
|      |                                        |                                         |
|      | L H H L H H S                          | L H H S L L H S                         |
| (c)  | Òbí ajùgwó íjé                         | Òbí àkà jùβo íjé                        |
|      | Nm. V-pr.refuse perf.journey           | Nm.perf.neg.aux.refuse neg. aux.journey |
|      | Obi has refused to go                  | Obi has not refused to go.              |
|      |                                        |                                         |
|      | H L H L H H S /                        | H L H S L L H S                         |
| (d)  | Úchè ajùgwó íjé /                      | Úché àkàá jùβo íjé                      |
|      | Nm.v-pr.refuse perf. journey           | Nm.perf.neg.aux.refuseneg.aux.journey   |
|      | Uche has refused to go/                | Uche has not refused to go.             |

To form the perfective affirmative aspect as in the above examples, the root verb is sandwiched by a harmonizing open vowel prefix which assumes the tone of the final syllable of the preceding subject for Tone Class 1 and 2 verbs, but a stable high tone for Class 3, and a high tone perfective suffix “=gwo”.

The negative form involves the substitution of “=gwo” with the negative particle “βo” and the introduction of the high tone “àkà” which replaces the open vowel prefix. The auxiliary particle carries inherent high tones whose final syllable is changed to downstep if followed by a verb whose root vowel is high or stable if the root vowel of the following verb is low.

**5. Question Formation**

Just as Akinremi (2004) sees tone as forming the underlying structure of Igbo Yes/No question by the raise of a phonetic dummy to host the tone, some question types in Mgbidi employs similar dummy (O) post-verbally to host tone, and such tone by contrasting with the tone of the last syllable of the verb such questions are formed (see Oha, 2005).

*Statement/Question*

- |     |                           |                   |
|-----|---------------------------|-------------------|
|     | L L L L /                 | L L L L H         |
| (a) | Òdori nọ /                | Òdori nọ ó        |
|     | Nm. Be Nm./               | Be Qm             |
|     | Odori is present at home/ | Is Odori present? |



|     |                                                            |                                     |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|     | H S Level /                                                | L H H L                             |
| (b) | Ō rigwo                                                    | Ō rigwo ò                           |
|     | 3sgsp.eat perf./                                           | 3sgsp.eat.perf.Qm.                  |
|     | He has eaten /                                             | Has he eaten?                       |
|     | L L L L L H S Level /                                      | L L L L L L H H S Level             |
| (c) | Òdori galu áβiẹ /                                          | Ōdori galu ó áβiẹ                   |
|     | Nm.go rv-pst.market /                                      | Nm.go rv-pst.Qm market              |
|     | Odori went to the market /                                 | Did Odori go to the market?         |
|     | H L H H H L /                                              | H L L L H                           |
| (d) | Mádù biẹlù /                                               | Mmádù biẹlù ó                       |
|     | Nm come rv-pst /                                           | Nm.come rv-pst.Qm                   |
|     | Someone came/                                              | Did someone came?                   |
|     | H L L H L L /                                              | L L H S Level                       |
| (e) | Ō βùru Mádù                                                | Ō βùru ó mmádù                      |
|     | 3sgsp.see rv-pst-person /                                  | 3sgsp.see rv-pst.Qm person          |
|     | He saw a person /                                          | Did s/he see someone?               |
|     | L H L H H S Level                                          | L L L L H S – Level                 |
| (f) | Èyí chòlụ ónye ohi /                                       | ñđi ónye Únu cholú/ùnu cholụ ó onye |
|     | We want a thief /                                          | Who do you (pl.) want?              |
|     | L H L L H L L H L H H H S Levels                           |                                     |
| (g) | Èyí chòlụ Mádù Ndi ónye Únu cholụ                          |                                     |
|     | 1splsp.want rv-ind.person Wh.Qm.person 1splsp.want rv-ind. |                                     |
|     | We want someone Who do you want?                           |                                     |
|     | L L H H S Levels                                           |                                     |
| (h) | Ò kwà ó gụ biẹlù égú                                       |                                     |
|     | Pro.pl.clt.Qm.2sgop.come rv-pst farm                       |                                     |
|     | Aren't you the one who came to the farm?                   |                                     |

The above examples represent four question types Oha (2005) identifies as derived through a tonal alternation in Mgbidi. Examples 2 (a-c) represent Yes/No question, (d-e) the Wh-question, (f-g) the Ndi-question (or Mgbidi version of the Igbo Cleft question) and (g) the Tag question.

In each case an inserted post verbal particle O harmonizing with the final syllable of the preceding verb contrasts in tone with that of the syllable immediately preceding it.

### 3. Discussion

The foregoing makes some striking revelations of contexts where tone determines a constructions type. Thus apart from other general information that tone conveys in the language (cf: Nwachukwu, 1995; Okorji, 1998 and Mbah, 1999, 2005) in Mgbidi it performs some other syntactic constructions.

Mgbidi realizes certain forms of discourse through tonal alternation that involves the raising of the tone on the verbs of the constructions with object ellipsis. Such discourses are expressed to emphatically confirm an action or event, as shown in 1 (a-e), cited below for ease of reference:

|                       |                |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Ò-riri                | He ate         |
| H S Level             |                |
| 3sgsp.eat rv-pst      |                |
| Òke kpólù yé          | Oke called him |
| L L H H S             |                |
| Nm call rv-pst 3gsop. |                |

Corresponding structures with the full object complement have all the syllables of the verb on low tone, as shown below.

|                      |                 |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Òriri jí             | He ate yam      |
| H L L H              |                 |
| 3sgsp.eat rv-pst yam |                 |
| Òke kpólù Ékwe       | Oke called Ekwe |
| L L L L H H          |                 |
| Nm.Call rv-pst.Nm.   |                 |

Such discourse arises to clear doubted proposition. Even where a pronoun referential to the omitted object fills the complement position, the altered tones remain the same as the above examples show necessitating the term a slot-filler for such pronoun. This tonal behaviour compares with the “up step” tone of Aguata (cf: Ikekeonwu, 1986).

The past habitual aspect presents evidence of tonal alternation in Mgbidi syntax. A frequentative marker “du” and the progressive marker “na” in that order precedes the verb complex formed with a harmonizing open vowel prefix. The tone of the “na” progressive is raised with the introduction of the low particle “du” which also raises the tone pattern of the open vowel prefix to high.

Another fact about the tonal alternation in Mgbidi dialect is the derivation of the future aspect. While in the conventional Igbo the future auxiliary is realized by the use of the auxiliary “ga”, Mgbidi alters the tonal structure of the progressive construction to derive its future aspect. The general progressive construction is as follows:

|             |                  |
|-------------|------------------|
| Ọ-nà-eri ji | He is eating yam |
|-------------|------------------|

Here the syllable of the “na” progressive marker is low spreading it to the open vowel prefixed to the verb. This forms the structure for Mgbidi future except that

the tone of the open vowel prefix is altered to high as in 3 (b), cited below depending on the inherent tone of the verb root as discussed in 2.3.

Ọ̀-nà-eri ji                      He will eat yam

The derivation of the negative perfective form in Mgbidi involves tonal changes on the background of the following structural permutations; insertion, substitution, assimilation and elision. The auxiliary “aka” is prefixed to the open vowel prefix of the root vowel to form the unfulfilled perfective verb complex (for example, àká erigwo). The final syllable of the auxiliary assimilates the open vowel prefix of the verb to yield “aka arigwo”). Furthermore, both the assimilated vowel prefix and the perfective auxiliary suffix “gwo” are elided to derive “aka ri”. Finally, the negative suffix (-βo) substitutes the elided perfective suffix to derive “akariβo). Tonally the unfulfilled auxiliary marker assumes high and down step tone respectively on its syllables, which spreads to other following syllables for Tone Class I and 2. For Tone Class 3, this spread is blocked by the low tone of the vowel of the verb root spreading to the rest of the syllables (cf: 1 a-d).

Oha (2005) discusses in details the Morphosyntax of some Mgbidi question formations with their intriguing tonal syntax. The main discovery is that the basic morpho-tonological marker for such sets is a post verbal phonetic form “O” harmonizing with the last syllable of the preceding verb, contrasting in tone with that of the vowel immediately preceding it (5a-h). We refer to this morpho-tonological complex as the question marker.

## Conclusion

That tone exerts dominance over several syntactic forms is borne out by the findings of this study. The study advances this claim by identifying some tonal alternations in Mgbidi that changes the meaning of some syntactic constructions adding to other features general to the conventional Igbo. It is hoped that the revelations of this study will contribute to the total understanding of tone, not only in the syntax of Igbo but also in general linguistic as a whole.

## Abbreviations

1. The following abbreviations are used in this paper H = High tone, L = Low tone, S = Down step tone, Pr. Aux = Progressive auxiliary, 1splsp = first person plural subject pronoun, 2sgop = Second person singular object pronoun, Pro.pl.=Pleonastic pronoun, Cl=Clitic, 3sgsp = Third person singular subject pronoun, 3sgop = Third person singular object pronoun, rvpst = rv suffix past tense, V-pre = vowel prefix, Nm = Name, Frqm = Frequentative marker, VCV = Vowel consonant vowel for Dummy, Fut aux = Future auxiliary, Perf = Perfective tense, Neg = Negative marker, Qm. = Question marker.

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## 42. A Linguistic Introduction to the Mòfòlí Dialect of Yorùbá\*

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Mòfòlí is one of the three dialects of the Yorùbá language spoken outside Nigeria. Speakers of the dialect reside mainly in Ketou city, in the Plateau State of the Republic of Bénin. Other Yorùbá dialects whose speakers reside outside the country are Tsábẹ́ and Ifẹ́ (Togo). This work, however, focuses on Mòfòlí dialect, because no linguistic research on it has ever been carried out. This work serves as a general survey on various syntactic aspects of the dialect. The syntactic analysis, nevertheless, does not aim to be exhaustive; it only serves as a linguistic introduction to Mòfòlí dialect. Moreover, the work expounds the etymology of the word 'Mòfòlí', it also analyses the syntactic variations of those new things which the dialect may teach us about syntax of the Yorùbá language.

### 1. Introduction

Language, like any other human institution, changes in time. Glottochronology attempts to measure the degree of such changes which usually bring about variations in languages and eventually responsible for the existence of dialects. Yorùbá language is a dialect continuum; and according to Adetugbọ (1973:184), 'there is lack of any deep study of Yorùbá dialects and the infancy of dialectology of the Yorùbá linguistic area'. This opinion is corroborated by Awóbùlúyì (1998:10-11). In their various classifications of the Yorùbá dialects, about twenty-six dialects were subsumed as belonging to NWY, NEY, CY, SWY and SEY<sup>1</sup> dialect subgroups – cf. Délàńò (1958:xii), Adetugbọ (1973:183-185), Oyèláràn (1976:624) and Awóbùlúyì (1998:1-10). While enumerating some of the general features of differentiations which set off these dialect areas from one another, Awóbùlúyì (1998:9) identifies the speakers of the dialect grouping of SWY as those residing outside the geographical entity called Nigeria. He declares specifically that 'We are not going to discuss this dialect subgroup because no linguistic research on them has been carried out'.<sup>2</sup> The three dialects in SWY grouping are Tṣábẹ́-Kétu (Dahomey) and Ifẹ́ (Togo). The comment made above by Awóbùlúyì on SWY dialects serves as a wheel that is pivoting the focus and goals of this paper. We want to begin some grammatical expositions on these "outside" dialects of the Yorùbá language; and see how they differ from or resemble the *koine* known as Standard Yorùbá (SY). Although three of the dialects in SWY are identified, this paper is not intended as a general introduction to all of them. This will be done elsewhere. We however pick Kétu-Dahomey as the central study of this linguistic analysis. We shall now expound the etymology



of the word Mòfòlí before we make a brief introduction to the aspects of the syntax of Mòfòlí dialect<sup>3</sup>.

## 2. The Etymology of Mòfòlí

The language of "Kétou" people in the Plateau State of the Republic of Bénin is commonly referred to as Mòfòlí. If we start from the dialect groupings of Yorùbá language in Western Nigeria, and we move to the dialect boundaries of SWY in Bénin; we will discover a distinct, gradual and unnoticed transition across these linguistic areas. Following the isogloss, we will begin to come in contact with Mòfòlí dialect along cities like Porto-Novo (Àjàsé), Wondo, Tṣákete, Kpòbè and eventually Kétou where the majority of the speakers of the dialect reside. The response of our informants to the question, "Which Yorùbá dialect do you speak", is in (1) and (2); while the origin of the word Mòfòlí is summarised in (3) and (4).

- (1) (a) Yòbá lí gbogbo Ikétou.  
Yorùbá is all Kétu.  
"Everybody in Kétu is Yorùbá".
- (b) Mòfòlí lí.  
Mòfòlí is.  
"It is Mòfòlí dialect"
- (c) Èdè íbílẹ̀ Ikétou lí jẹ Mòfòlí.  
Language custom Kétu is call Mòfòlí  
"The customary language of Kétu is called Mòfòlí "
- (2) (a) N kà gbọ kànkàn àfi Ikétou tsáá.  
I NEG hear nothing except Ketu alone.  
"I can't speak any other except Kétu".
- (b) Mòfòlí kàn tsò.  
Mòfòlí only just.  
"Just only Mòfòlí dialect".
- (3) (a) Fọ lí  
Say that  
"I said that"
- (b) Fọ lí àn  
Say that so  
"What I said"
- (c) Mọ lí àn  
I that so  
"I said so"
- (4) (a) Mọ fọ lí  
I say that  
"I said that"
- (b) Mọ fọ lí àn  
I say that so  
"This is what I said".

The possible source of the word Mòfòlí is conspicuous from those sentences above. 'Mò fò lí àn' literally in S.Y means "Mo wí báyií' or 'Báyií ni mo sọ' i.e. 'I said that' or 'This is what I said'. The statement 'Mò fò lí àn' is now concatenated to derive 'Mòfòlí', the name given to the variety of Yorùbá language spoken by the 'Kétou' people of Bénin Republic. It should be borne in mind that ethno historical descriptions of the origin of the Yorùbá race, lend some inferences to the royalty of the "Alaketou" as one of the seven sons of Odùduwà, the progenitor of Yorùbá people. Mòfòlí speakers hold tenaciously to this belief. The difference in the pronunciation of the word "Ketou" as against "Kétu" used by the speakers of the S.Y should be noted. For instance, the inscriptions on the wall of the palace of the King of Kétu unfalteringly read thus:

- (5) 'Afin Alaketou ti ilẹ Iketou Oba Adiro Adetutu'  
 "The palace of the king of Kétu land, king Adio Adetutu".

We could not ascertain the occurrence of any other diphthong vowels in the vowel system of Mòfòlí dialect except /ou/ as in 'ikétou'; just like /ou/ in English word 'go' - /gou/. In fact the Mòfòlí vowel system conforms to that of the S.Y. However, it could be deduced that the occurrence of /ou/ in the dialect is as a result of the influence of the French language, the official language in Benin Republic. We discovered, moreover, that some features of differentiations peculiar to Mòfòlí are influenced by other dialects of Yorùbá which are not too distant from Kétu. Such divergences are expressed from Òhòrí and Àjá. For instance, our informants attested to the fact that the origin of 'fò' (say) which is found in Mòfòlí is from the Òhòrí dialect. Yet, 'fò' has already become part of the vocabulary of the Mòfòlí speakers; its rate of retention has now become relatively stable and constant as witnessed in (6).

- (6) (a) Èyàn yọ fò lí kọ lọ mú kàn lí kanga...  
 Person REL say that he go take thing in well  
 "The person who said that he should go and take something inside a well..."
- (b) Án kà lè pìtèn Yòbá fò lí kán gbàgbé ikétou  
 They NEG POT tell story Yorùbá say that they forget Ketu  
 "They cannot tell the story of Yorùbá race and forget to include Kétu".
- (c) Kí ọn má pè li fò lí ànàgó mó  
 That they NEG call us say that black NEG  
 "They should stop calling us black people".

It is the characteristics of the speakers of Mòfòlí dialect to retain a mid-tone front close vowel /i/ in the initial position of some nouns, most prominently, the noun 'ikétou'. This is also witnessed in (7) below:

- 
- (7) (a) Èdè *ikétou*, íbílẹ̀ *ikétou*, Yòbá *ikétou* lí jẹ̀ Mọ̀fọ̀lí  
 Language Ketu custom Ketu Yorùbá Ketu is Mọ̀fọ̀lí  
 "The customary language of Ketu people of Yorùbá land is called Mọ̀fọ̀lí"
- (b) Bá tse gbọ́ ítẹ̀n *ikétou* sí lí pé  
 We as hear story Ketu to is that  
 "The Ketu people story is recounted thus"
- (c) *Ikétou* gan lẹ̀ tọ  
 Ketu exact FOC-him wants  
 "He wants to hear the exact Ketu dialect"
- (d) Olóyè *ikétou* lí àtòmi ẹ̀  
 Chief Ketu is and-me him.  
 "The two of us are Kétu High Chiefs".

If the constituent 'mọ' (I) is deleted from Mọ̀fọ̀lí, we will have 'fọ́lí' which means 'mo sọ' (I say) in S.Y. However, following (8) below, it is noticed that the etymology of the word 'Mọ̀fọ̀lí' does not sprout out completely in its entire meaning. It lies in the integral part 'fọ́lí' when the constituent 'mọ' has been deleted.

- (8) Mọ́ tsọ́ fọ́ lí  
 I say say that  
 "I speak 'fọ́lí' dialect"

What our informant intended in (8) was to make us aware of the fact that he speaks a dialect called 'fọ́lí'. If we try to discard the integral meaning of (8), and we consider the meaning of 'Mọ̀fọ̀lí' in its entirety, the result will be (9b). (9b) lacks any semantic coherence.

- (9) (a) Mọ́ tsọ́ fọ́ lí  
 I say say that  
 "I speak 'fọ́lí' dialect"
- (b) \*Mọ́ tsọ́ mọ́ tsọ́  
 "I say I say"

### 3. The Syntax of Mọ̀fọ̀lí Dialect

Francis (1983:41) observes that 'variation in syntax has been very little studied by dialectologists'. This observation is still relevant in the study of the grammar of Yorùbá dialects in general. It prompted scholars of the language to start looking "for new things the dialects may teach us about the language" Awobuluyi (1992:71). We are able to observe some principles, systems and grammatical rules that are typical of the Mọ̀fọ̀lí dialect. Such syntactic variations include the

formation of negation, question formation, pronoun, aspectual markers, relative clause and focus construction, word arrangement and morpheme combinations.

### 3.1 Negation in Mòfòlí

The grammatical formatives that realise the Mòfòlí negative markers are different from those of the SY. Traditionally, (10) indicates the negative markers in SY.

(10) Kò, kì í, má, kọ, má "NEG"

Mòfòlí does not use all the NEG in (10) as shown in (11-15) where we have NEG formatives like: *kè, kàn, kà, kọ* and *mé*.

- (11) (a) Tsànyà *kè* sùn  
Tsànyà NEG sleep  
"Sànyá has not slept"
- (b) Tsànyà *kè* tí sun  
Tsànyà NEG PERF sleep  
"Sànyà has not yet slept".
- (c) Ọmọ *kéké* lí mí, n *kè* líyàwó  
Child little is me I NEG have wife  
"I am but a little child, I am not married".
- (12) (a) An *kàn* gba òyá gbọ.  
They NEG accept that-mother believe  
"They didn't even accept their mother's advice"
- (b) An *kàn* gba baba gbọ.  
They NEG accept father believe  
"They didn't even accept their father's advice".
- (13) (a) N *kà* le tsé o  
I NEG POT do it  
"I cannot do it".
- (b) N *kà* gbọ kànkàn aṣí ikétou  
I NEG hear anything except iketou  
"I didn't understand any language except Kétu"
- (c) *Kà* a run  
NEG it destroy  
"It cannot be destroyed"
- (14) (a) I *kọ* gbọdọ ná o  
You NEG must beat him  
"You must not beat him".

- 
- (b) An *kò* fàtṣẹ̀ ìyá baba lọ lílẹ̀ ọkọ  
They NEG command mother father go house husband  
"They got married often without their parent's consent".
- (c) *Kò* tsí ọgbọ̀n kà̀n í a lẹ̀ dá  
NEG don't wisdom one that we POT do  
"There is no way out of this".
- (d) N *kò* gbọ̀dẹ̀ miẹ̀n kú u  
I NEG hear-language other add it  
"I do not understand any other language".
- (15) (a) *Mé* febi pá o  
NEG use-hunger kill him  
"Don't starve him to death".
- (b) Baba *kò mé* gbọ̀rọ̀ í  
Father that-he NEG hear this  
"The father should not hear this".
- (16) (a) Bó tsìpẹ̀ kẹ̀ a le kẹ̀ gbà  
If he beg PREV we POT NEG accept  
"Even if he begs us we will not accept"

We observe that in Mòfòlí dialect, an optional deletion of the consonant of the sentence negators does not occur *-kè*, *kà̀n* and *kà̀*; and there is no subsequent (optional) vowel assimilation. We hardly find expressions like (17) below in any of the utterances of the Mòfòlí speakers.

- (17) (a) Tsànyà è sùn  
Tsànyà NEG sleep  
"Sànyà has not slept".
- (b) An *àn* gba tiyá gbọ̀  
They NEG accept that-mother believe  
"They didn't even accept their mother's advice".
- (c) N *à* lẹ̀ tse  
I NEG POT do  
"I cannot do it".

It could, therefore, be derivationally explained that the three sentence negators *kè*, *kan* and *kà* found in Mòfòlí are variants. Thus, we may say that the NEG in (11-13) i.e. *kè*, *kan* and *kà* are derived from the first NEG in (10) 'kò'; without the usual deletion of the consonant of the NEG. Among the underlying stems of the derivation of *kò* 'NEG' in S.Y are *kè/kẹ̀/ki/kà* 'NEG' which have been dropped in S.Y usages but are retained and widely used in some of the dialect of the language

like Mòbà, Ìlàjẹ, Ìkálẹ̀, etc. Mòfòlí is also one of those dialects that retained the use of *kè* in (11); *kàn* in (12) and *kà* in (13) above. The phonological processes, such as (18),

- (18) (i) An gba tiyá gbọ  
 (ii) An kàn gba tiyá gbọ  
 (iii) An àn gba tiyá gbọ  
 (iv) A àn gba tiyá gbọ  
 "They didn't even accept their mother's advice".

where we have the deletion of the consonant of the NEG, the assimilation of the stranded vowel, and the occurrence of High Tone Syllable (HTS); would have been possible but for the non-occurrence of (17b) already specified above.

All the occurrences of *kọ* 'NEG' in (14) also conform directly to the usages of *kò* 'NEG' of SY. So, the *kọ* 'NEG' of Mòfòlí is directly derived from *kò* 'NEG' of SY. which has similar features of low tone and velar consonant. But unlike *kò* 'NEG', the consonant of *kọ* 'NEG' is never deleted and there is never a stranded vowel to be assimilated, as in Standard Yorùbá, as shown in (19).

- (19) (a) (i) N kò lọ  
 (ii) N ò lọ  
 (iii) N lọ  
 I NEG go  
 "I will not go"
- (b) (i) N kọ gbọdè mièn  
 \*N ò gbọdè mièn  
 \*Ọ ò gbọdè mièn  
 I NEG hear-language other  
 "I don't understand any other language"

The Mòfòlí negative markers (variants) described so far function as the sentence negators in (11a), (12a), (13a) and as the negators of the imperative in (15a). The formative use in S.Y for the negation of the imperative is *má* 'NEG' as seen in (10) above. But Mòfòlí dialect uses the variant *mé* 'NEG' which might have long been dropped in SY utterances. Again, there is no lengthening of *mé* 'NEG' on a low tone or any changing of the high tone to mid tone so as to derive (20) instead of (21).

- (20) (a) \*Mèè febi pá o  
 NEG use-hunder kill him  
 "Don't starve him to death".
- (b) \*Mèè tsògùn fú u  
 NEG tell-medicine for him  
 "Don't tell him the medicine".



- 
- (21) (a) *Mé febi pá o*  
 NEG use-hunger kill him  
 "Don't starve him to death".
- (b) *Mé tsògùn fú u*  
 NEG tell-medicine for him  
 "Don't tell him the medicine"

In (16a), the principle that restricts the sequence and co-occurrence of the auxiliary verbs in S.Y, as detailed in Adewole (1989:1-17), is partly altered by some Mòfòlí utterances as witnessed in (16a) repeated as (22) below:

- (22) *Bó tsìpè kẹ, a le kẹ gbà*  
 If he beg PREV, we POT NEG accept  
 'Even if he begs us, we will not accept'.

The Mòfòlí utterances in (22) might have altered the rule instantiation in (23), which "introduce the potential modal *lè* 'can/may' and does not permit either the NEG *kò* 'not' or the obligative 'gbòdò' to follow the potential modal *lè* 'can/may'".

- (23)            8 +HAB, + ALT.1     $\cong$   
                   8 +NEG, + ALT.1     $\cong$   
 +M            8 + PERF                     $\cong$     *lè* 'can/may'  
                   8 + PROG, + ALT.1     $\cong$

The claim here is that where (23) introduces (23a) as ungrammatical; (22) will present the same utterance, as shown in (23b), as grammatical.

- (23a) \**A lè kò gbà*  
 We POT NEG accept

- (23b) *A le kẹ gba.*  
 We POT NEG accept.  
 "We will not accept".

Another example is noticed in (27i). We noticed some instances where there are occurrences of *kò* NEG (as in (10)) in the speeches of the Mòfòlí speakers. Such occurrences are however scanty and irregular as in (24).

- (24) (a) *N kò mù*  
 I NEG know  
 "I don't know"
- (b) *Òlàn kò tó.*  
 Person NEG able.  
 "Nobody is able ..."

### 3.2 Questions Formation in Mòfòlí

Bamgboṣe (1967:43) identifies *kí* 'what', *ta* 'who', *èwo* 'which', *èló* 'how much', *ibo* 'where' as question items which are initial items in a *ni*-clause in SY. But in Mòfòlí dialect, about two features of differentiation sharply marked and distinguished its question formation principles. It is noted, in the first instance, that Mòfòlí question markers differ from those of SY. They included 'who', *ké* 'what', *tṣe* 'do', *fe* 'how', *te* 'where'. Secondly, the *ni* item is always completely deleted in Mòfòlí *ni*-clauses as shown in (25a-h) below.

- |          |                                                                                      |     |                                                                       |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (25) (a) | Lè ọ pọmọ ọba?<br>Who FOC kill-son king<br>"Who killed the king's son"               | (b) | Lè ọ jí owó í?<br>Who FOC steal money this<br>"Who stole this money?" |
| (c)      | Ké ó dé?<br>What but happen<br>"What happened?"                                      | (d) | tṣe tṣùpọ jẹan?<br>Do Sùp eat-meat<br>"Did Sùpọ eat the meat?"        |
| (e)      | tṣe dada mò bá in?<br>Do well I meet you<br>"Did I meet you well?"                   | (f) | Ilé fe? (Ilé n kọ?)<br>Home how<br>"How is your home?"                |
| (g)      | Ọgègè n fe?<br>(Ègè mi n kọ?)<br>Cassava my how<br>"How about my cassava?"           |     |                                                                       |
| (h)      | Ẹli bèèrè n te?<br>Person PROG ask me where<br>"Where is the person looking for me?" |     |                                                                       |
| (i)      | Ọmu ú tsẹ n te?<br>Child RC offend me how<br>"How about the child that offended me?" |     |                                                                       |

A look at (25a&c) above shows that, following Oyelaran's (1993:164-165) definition of focus/topicalisation, the focused elements (*lẹ*, *ké*) are not "obligatorily marked (followed) by the operator *ni*". Likewise, anti-focus could not be established in the examples because the element *ni* is not "moved to the end of the phrase". What could be established presently is that the focus "operator" is always completely deleted in Mòfòlí question formation specified in (25a&c). The deletion however requires another explanation. For instance, does the deletion occur when a noun rather than a pronoun as in (25a&c) precede the question markers as in (26)? We would need to further expand our collection and presentation of Mòfòlí data to be able to properly answer this question.

- 
- (26) (a) Ta ni Olú nà?  
Who FOC Olú beat  
"Who was beaten by Olú?"
- (b) Kí ni ọba wa ẹ?  
What FOC king our do  
"What did our king do?"

The question markers of both S.Y and Mòfòlí dialect, as shown in (25a&c) above, are interspersed. But those of (25f&h) i.e. *fẹ* and *te* are not quite so; they differ phonetically and phonemically. Bamgboe (1990:185) refers to them as "verbal" question markers.

### 3.3 Word Order and Morphemic Combination in Mòfòlí

Mòfòlí dialect, like some other dialects in NEY and SEY subgroup -cf Awobuluyi (1998:3-5), features a concatenation of two different phrases NP, VP or PP with no constituent intervention. A closer look at (27a-i),

- (27) (a) Gbogbo oyè ọ ku ìjọba pí í.  
(Gbogbo oyè tí ó kù ni ìjọba pín)  
All title REL left government HTS divide them  
"It is the government that distributed all the remaining titles".
- (b) Ọlọgbọn ayé kàn kè ta omi lí kókó etí atọ.  
(Ọlọgbọn ayé kan kò lè ta omi ní kókó sí etí aṣọ)  
Wise man earth one NEG fasten water PREP knot side cloth.  
"No wise man can use cloth to fasten up water".
- (c) Baba owó ún wà nọ́ọ è àmọ́ í kọ́ fẹ́ nàwó.  
(Baba náà ní owó lẹ́wọ́ sùgbọ́n kò fẹ́ nàwó)  
Money that have hand his but he NEG to spend-money.  
"The man has a lot of money but does not want to spend it".
- (d) Ìgbàgbọ́ dé ọ fà á.  
(Ìgbàgbọ́ tí ó dé ni ó fà á)  
Christianity arrive FOC cause it.  
"The arrival of Christianity caused it".
- (e) Ọgbà í wà líbí sojú mi mọ.  
(Ní ojú mi ni wọ́n ẹ mọ ọgbà tó wà níbì)  
Fence that exist PREP here witness me built  
"I witnessed the building of this fence".
- (f) Ọlìà kò tó (Kò sí ẹni tí ó tó bẹẹ)  
Person NEG able  
"Nobody is able..."

- 
- (g) Àgbákò kò mé kó òlìà (Kí àgbákò má ko ènìyàn)  
 Evil NEG NEG meet person  
 "That no evil should befall us"
- (h) Ikétou gan lẹ tọ (Èdè Kétu gan-an ni ó fẹ gbọ)  
 Kétu exact foc-him want  
 "He wants to hear the exact Kétu dialect".
- (i) Ìnábò wá íbí lóni kò le kè fò  
 Ìyábò will come here today NEG POT NEG change  
 (Ìyábò yóò wá sí íbí lóni kò ní yẹ)  
 "Ìyábò will come here today definitely".

will further establish the similarities and differences between the basic word order of SY and Mòfòlí dialect.

In (27a) for instance, two NPs the subject Noun Phrase (*gbogbo oyè*) and another Noun Phrase which features in a Relative Clause (*ó*), are stacked together. The intervening element i.e. the relative clause marker (*tí*) has been deleted. Similarly the focus marker (*ní*) of the sentence is deleted. S.Y does not allow this type of phrasal orderings in a sentence. About two clusters of prepositional phrase should feature in (27b); but the deletion of the head of the second prepositional phrase (*sí*) now alters the regular position of the other elements. One could assume wrongly that '*l'*' assigns its category to the entire word - *kókó etí atsq*. If the omitted (*ní*) constituent is taken as the predicate of the Mòfòlí utterance in (27c), then the two clustered nouns '*baba*' (man) and *owó* (money) belong to different syntactic categories. Again, the relative clause marker and the focus operator in (27d) have been deleted. The foregrounded element in (27e), *ogbà* 'fence', has been moved to the front of the sentence; such process is called topicalisation. The Mòfòlí utterances in (27f, g & h) seem to conform to the basic word order in S.Y sentences, yet such derived contextual implications negate any thorough semantic realisation. The deletion of the complementiser in (27g) lends credence to this assertion. Again, one could wrongly assume that the object of the predicate in (27i) is *íbí* 'here', whereas the two words belong to different categories; *wá* 'come' is the head of the VP, while *íbí* 'here' is an element governed by the omitted *sí* 'to' the head of the PP.

### 3.4 The Mòfòlí High Tone Syllable (HTS)

The form that the HTS has in Mòfòlí utterances is *ó* (HTS) which, following Awobuluyi (1992:32), may "fuse with the third person singular subject pronoun". The instances of *ó* form as in (28a-f) represent the Mòfòlí HTS alone.

- (28) (a) Gbogbo èdèkedè *ó* pò lílu í  
 (Oríṣií èdé ló wà nínú ilú yìí)  
 All languages HTS many in-town this  
 "There are many languages in this town".

- 
- (b) Àlejò ọ wà lédò ọba (Àlejò wà ní ọdò ọba)  
 Visitor HTS exist with King  
 "The visitor is with the King".
- (c) Tsànyá á sùn (Sànyá sùn)  
 Sànyà HTS sleep  
 "Sànyà has slept".
- (d) Dàda ọ jẹun (Dàda jẹun)  
 Dàda HTS eat  
 "Dàda has eaten".
- (e) Mọ lọ ọ lóko (Mo lọ sí oko)  
 I go PERF to-farm  
 "I went to the farm"
- (f) Lóko mọ lọ (Oko ni mo lọ)  
 to-farm I go  
 "To the farm I went"

The HTS is not realised after the pronominals in Mòfòlí dialect. But the environment in which the HTS occurs in the above Mòfòlí utterances, might have altered Adewole's (1986:85) HTS definition as "the high tone syllable which occurs and is assimilated to the final vowel of an NP in an S". All the realisations of the Mòfòlí HTS above except (28c) do not assimilate to the final vowel of the NP; it is morphologically /j/ in most contexts. Note (28e) which is a resemblance of HTS whereas it is not because it does not occur between subject NP and VP.

### 3.5 The complementizer Marker in Mòfòlí

Consider the occurrence of COMP in these examples in (29):

- (29) (a) Bí kọ tse fọ lí Ọlọrun tsetán ọdodo  
 If NEG that COMP God ready truth  
 "It not that God is always after the truth".
- (b) A nì bẹ ọn fọ lí ká mú u lẹwọ olójú kàn itso làdà í lí  
 We PROG beg them COMP that-we take it foc-hand  
 Owner-eye one ADV foc-cutlass HTS have  
 "We are imploring them to be faithful".
- (c) Torí kí rańtí fọ lí àgbà í bọ wá kàn òhu  
 Because that remember COMP elder HTS come  
 "Because he should be reminded that he too will become old"
- (d) Ìn áa tsọ fú u fọ lí ọmù-ù kọ gbédọ wálé  
 We will tell give him COMP child NEG must come-home  
 "We will tell him that the child should not come home"

- (e) A lè tso *fò lí* àtòmi è jò ló lóko  
 We POT tell COMP and-me him together go farm  
 "We can say that we went to the farm together".

Complementizer is a category which introduce a subordinate clause. In S.Y the item *pé* 'that' is always used as COMP. But in Mòfòlí, it is *fò lí* 'that' that exemplifies COMP most especially in reported speeches.

### 3.6 Relative Clause and Focus Construction in Mòfòlí

The NP in any focused sentence in S.Y is always coded initially with a *ni*-insertion, cf Yusuf (1991:29). What differentiates focusing in Mòfòlí is rather a *li*-insertion as in (30) below:

- (30) (a) Èdò Ọhòrí lí (Èdè Ọhòrí ni)  
 Language Ọhòrí FOC  
 "It is Ọhòrí language".
- (b) Ọjà ló ló ló fu diá ilé ọkọ  
 (Ọjà ni ó ló ni ó fi di ará ilé ọkọ).  
 Market FOC - PRON go FOC-PRON that become house husband  
 "It was the market that she went and eventually got married).
- (c) Àgbàlagbà lẹ́ẹ́ ronú eéko ọmọ  
 (Àgbàlagbà ni ó máa ronú orúkọ ọmọ).  
 Old man FOC-HAB think name child.  
 "It is an old man that usually thinks of the name a child would have".
- (d) Ìwọ lẹ́ẹ́ rọpò baba (Ìwọ ni yóò rọpò baba).  
 You FOC-ASS succeed father.  
 "It is you that will succeed the father".
- (e) Yòbá kẹẹ́ lí (Yorùbá ni)  
 Yorùbá PREV FOC  
 "He is a Yorùbá man".
- (f) Ọ̀u kẹẹ́ lí í dàámú lí (Ọ̀un ni ó ń dàámú wa).  
 He PREV FOC HTS trouble us.  
 "He is the one troubling us".

All the NPs in the sentences above are focused, and whatever systems of rules - copy and deletion rule, move alpha, etc. - that are used for the derivation of the focus construction, the *li*-insertion which is a variant of *ni*-insertion of S.Y, does not change in Mòfòlí dialect. We, following Adewòle (1991:21), agree that the relative marker *tí* 'REL' "occurs in a NP and will be analysed as a NP form".



Although the relative marker is not clearly specified in Mòfòlí, it could be *yí* or *yó* 'REL' as seen in (31). Note (31f) which we just come across in a Mòfòlí utterance.

- (31) (a) Sátidé yó kojá li ọdún èwé.  
Saturday REL past is festival èwé.  
"Last Saturday was the Èwé festival".
- (b) Àńfàní gbogbo àọn yó gbé àpótí ìdìbò li.  
Benefit all those REL carry box ballot  
"It is the benefit of all those who contested".
- (c) Àbí àọn yó jókòó líbí?  
How those REL sit here  
"How about those who sat down here?"
- (d) Ọba yó tsọ wa tí tí òlì...  
King REL protect us till today  
"The king who protected us till today..."
- (e) Gbogbo oyè ọ kù ìjọba ọ pí i.  
All title REL remain government HTS divide them  
"The government distributed all the remaining titles"
- (f) Ihun i í mée jẹ li àgbò (Ohun tí ó máa n jẹ ni àgbò)  
What REL HAB eat is ram  
"Ram is what it usually eats".

### 3.7 The Use of Pre-verb *Kẹẹ* in Mòfòlí

One of the notable features which mark off the Mòfòlí speakers is the presence of the pre-verb *kẹẹ* in their utterances. Consider such pre-verb in (33). The Orígbó community, within the larger NWY dialect subgroup, features the presence of such pre-verb *kaà* in their speeches as shown in (32) – cf. Oyetade (1995:209).

- (32) Olú ọ kaà tii gbọ.  
Olú NEG PREV NEG hear  
"Olú have not heard"
- (33) (a) Ìn ín tsitsẹ kẹẹ li. (Mo n sises ni)  
I am work PREV FOC  
"I am working".
- (b) Ikétou kẹẹ na bí mi. (Kétu ni wón bí mi sí).  
Ketu PREV they born me  
"I was born in Ketu".
- (c) Olú kọ gbetsu kẹẹ lọ lójà (Olú kò gbé ọsọ lọ sí ọjà).  
Olú NEG carry-yam PREV go to-market.  
"Olú did not carry the yam to the market".

- (d) Tsànyá á sùn kẹẹ (Sànyá sùn)  
Sànyá HTS sleep PREV  
"Sànyá has slept".

### 3.8 Other Syntactic Variations in Mòfòlí

It has been noted earlier that this work cannot serve as a detailed general introduction to all the aspects of the syntax of Mòfòlí, it will be done elsewhere. For instance, the details of the Mòfòlí pronoun, tense/aspect and verbal tone change (if any) could not be thoroughly ascertained until further collection and analysis of Mòfòlí data. But in (34), it could be deduced that the future marker in Mòfòlí dialect is *ẹ* 'will' which is in contrast with *yóò/ó/á* of S.Y. Again, the formative that marks the third person plural (subject) pronoun is 'they' in the dialect; it is different from *wón* 'they' found in S.Y as shown in (35).

- (34) Omu miẹn ẹ dúó, ẹ gbàtsẹ iyá. (Omo mìràń yóò dúró gba àşẹ iyá)  
Child other will wait, will receive blessing mother.  
"Some other children will wait and will receive their mother's blessing".

- (35) (a) A Question in SY:

- (i) Ìyàwó mélòó ni ẹ ní?  
"How many wives do you have?"  
(ii) Omo mélòó ni ẹ bí?  
"How many children do you have?"

- (b) An Answer in Mòfòlí:

- (i) Ẹ tó mēta (Wón to mēta)  
They about three  
"They are about three"  
(ii) Ẹ tó máu (Wón tó márùn-ún)  
They about five  
"They are about five".

## 4. Conclusion

We have looked at the grammatical variations in Mòfòlí, a relatively unknown Yorùbá dialect as far as linguistic research and analysis are concerned. As the analysis in this work shows, the traditional Standard Yorùbá negative markers differ from those of Mòfòlí where optional deletion of the consonant of the sentence negators are not allowed. Also, the Mòfòlí question markers are dissimilar from those of the S.Y. The item *ni* is always deleted in Mòfòlí *ni*-

clauses. Moreover, Mòfòlí syntax allows two NPs belonging to different heads of the phrase to be stacked together. Although HTS is not realised after the pronominals in Mòfòlí, HTS is a prominent feature in the dialect. Despite its "unfavourable" geographical location, the presence of the pre-verb *kẹẹ* in Mòfòlí utterances ties it up with other Yorùbá dialects of NWY, NEY and SEY categories.

Although this work does not aim to be exhaustive on each of the syntactic aspects highlighted in Mòfòlí dialect, it can still be a pivot upon which the usefulness of some linguistic hypotheses in Yorùbá language can be measured in dialectological perspectives.

## Notes

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1. These abbreviations correspond to:  
 MWY - Northwest Yorùbá  
 NEY - Northeast Yorùbá  
 CY - Central Yorùbá  
 SWY - Southwest Yorùbá  
 SEY - Southeast Yorùbá
2. During the preparation of this paper, we discovered a pamphlet written in French. It deals with the origin, history, arts and culture of Ketou people. It is titled "Les Villes Yoruba Du Dahomey: L'exemple De Ketou". My regards to Mr. Felix Omidire of Foreign Languages Department, O.A.U. for his assistance while translating this pamphlet.
3. This is a general survey of the grammar of Mòfòlí dialect. Major works are in preparation on the various syntactic aspects outlined in this study.

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## 43. Aspects of the Phonology of the Okun Dialects

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### **Introduction**

The Okun dialects which comprise Owé, Ìyàgbà, Ìjùmú, Bùnú and Ọwọ̀rọ̀ are spoken in the southern axis of Kogi State. The dialects are distinguishable as individual dialects but they are mutually intelligible to an extent. Mutual intelligibility is a test used by linguists to decide whether two linguistic communities speak different languages or different dialects of the same language (Steinberg, 1999).

A classification of the dialects according to their structural characteristics is carried out in this study. This study is divided into various sections accordingly.

### **The Okun People**

Owé, Ìyàgbà, Ìjùmú, Bùnú and Ọwọ̀rọ̀ peoples are referred to as the Okun people. Okun, which is a form of greeting, has become the common identity of the people who largely share some history and linguistic affinity. The people are believed to have migrated from Ile-Ife. According to Otitoju (2002:3) 'Okun confederation has always been referred to as a collection of different units who lived independent of each other with its own social organization though with bonding similarities.' In effect, each of these peoples has a separate history of origin and each group has its particular experiences.

Okun is a dialect of Yorùbá with its own peculiar features. The Okun people understand each other with varying degrees of mutual intelligibility. The Nupe wars of the 19<sup>th</sup> century left an indelible mark on the Okun people and dialects. The interaction with the Hausa especially because of the geopolitical zone the people have found themselves has an impact on the dialects.

The Okun people being studied are presently spread across six Local Government Areas of Kogi State. These are Kabba-Bunu, Yagba-West, Yagba-East, Mopa-Muro, Ìjùmú and Lokoja Local Government Areas. The Okun people have kiths and kins in Kwara, Ondo and Ekiti States.

### **The Owé People and Dialect**

According to oral tradition, the Owé people originated from Ile-Ife. Owé refers to both the people and their dialect. According to oral tradition, it is believed that the progenitors of the Owé people namely; Aro, Reka and Balaja together with their families left Ilé-Ifẹ̀ to settle north-wards as a result of unavailability of farm land. They found three separate settlements. According to Baiyere (1999:3), 'the three separate settlements grew until they merged into one single town, Kabba, comprising three clans called Katu, Odolu and Kabba. The Owé people can also



be found in neighbouring villages like Òtù-Egunbe, Gbólékò, Kákun, Ègbédá, Òkèdayò, Apánga, etc. The Owé speaking community is linguistically homogeneous. The Owé people are surrounded by the Bunu, Ijumu and Ebira peoples of Kogi State.

### **The Ìyàgbà People and Dialect**

It is difficult to say precisely which of the numerous historical towns in Yoruba land the Iyagbas came from. The most widely held belief is that they descended from a certain princess known as Iya-agba (old woman) who migrated from Ile-Ife because of the overpopulation there resulting from insufficient land for farming. This woman settled in Akata-Ere. Ìyàgbà is derived from Ìyá-àgbà. The Yagbas are today found in three adjoining Local Government Areas namely Yagba-East, Yagba-West and Mopa-Muro. Towns and villages in Yagba land include Egbe, Isanlu, Mopa, Efo-Amuro, Odo-Ere, Odo-Eri, Ponyan, Ejiba, Oranre, Ejuku, etc.

### **The Ìjùmú People and Dialect**

The Ìjùmú people, unlike the other groups who regard themselves as one and have one history of descent, are from different towns and villages with different historical backgrounds. The term Ìjùmú is an ancient name chosen for a modern administrative unit referred to as Ìjùmú Native Authority which was founded in 1937. Today, that same administrative unit is called Ìjùmú Local Government Area.

About twenty-four towns and villages speak Ijumu dialect. Some of these towns are Ife, Ighara, Ogidi, Egbeda-Ega, Iyamoye, Aduge, Iyah-Gbede and Okoro-gbede.

### **The Bùnú People and Dialect**

Bùnú people also migrated from Ile-Ife. It is believed that Ọlẹ Bunu who is the first settler in Bunuland is a direct descendant of Oduduwa (Otitoju, 2002:54). He was believed to have left Ile-Ife in annoyance because of the misunderstanding with his younger brother. The Abinu people (Bùnú) are made up of Kiri, Akumẹrindinlogun, Okemẹta and Okemẹsan groups. They are the second group that makes up Kabba-Bunu Local Government Area. Some of the villages that make up Bunuland are Ọlẹ, Akutupa, Okebukun, Apaa-Bunu, Agbẹdẹ-Bunu, Odo-Apẹ, Ayede-Ọpa, Aghara-Bunu, etc.

### **The Ọwọ̀rọ̀ Dialect and People**

The foundation of Ọwọ̀rọ̀ is traceable to two great hunter brothers who left Ile-Ife, a Yoruba town to hunt for food. One brother according to history, settled at 'Ọwọ mi rọ, coined Ọwọ̀rọ̀. It is spoken in the North-West of Lokoja in Kogi State, Nigeria. Ọwọ̀rọ̀ is located on a mountainous terrain above thirty-six (36) kilometers to the North-West of Lokoja, the Kogi State capital. Ọwọ̀rọ̀ spreads across sixteen (16) communities in Lokoja Local Government Area of Kogi State. These communities include the following towns and villages: Agbaja, Emu,

Tajimu, Jakura, Otube, Owara, Igbo-nla, Filele, Ijiho, Akpomo-ba, Obajana, Akpata, Osokosoko, Banda, Karara and Ogbagbon. Agbaja is the largest Ọwọ̀rọ̀ speaking community, hence, it may be said to be the representative of Ọwọ̀rọ̀.

The major occupation of the Ọwọ̀rọ̀s is farming and hunting. However, villages like Filele, Owara, and Banda are surrounded with rivers and as such they do a lot of fishing. Ọwọ̀rọ̀ represents one of the many Yoruba set ups in the political Northern Nigeria. By this set up and physical location, the Ọwọ̀rọ̀s form a transitional belt between the north and the south, and a notable link between Northerners and Southerners.

### **The Phonological System of Okun Dialects**

Phonology, one of the levels of linguistic studies is concerned with the study of sounds. It is also defined as the scientific study of the organization of speech sounds in languages. Gimson (2001:6) says that phonology ‘concerns how sounds function in a systematic way in a particular language’. Ladefoged (1975:23) also states that:

... phonology is the description of the systems and patterns of sounds that occur in a language. It involves studying a language to determine its distinctive sounds and to establish a set of rules that take place in the set of changes that take place in these sounds when they occur in different relationships with other sounds.

We will examine the phonology of the Okun dialects at both segmental and suprasegmental levels.

### **Segmental Phonology**

Sounds and phonemes in language are referred to as segmental. Jones (1967:47) sees a phoneme as “a family of sounds in a given language which are related in character and are used in such a way that no member ever occurs in a word in the same phonetic context as any other member.” Phonemes are the distinct segments that make up the total inventory of sounds.

A phoneme is the smallest linguistic unit of a language. Consonants and vowels make up the phonetic inventory of all human languages. These are also attested in the Okun dialects.

### **The Consonants of Okun Dialects**

Consonants are described by Bobda and Paul (1993:4) as sounds produced by the obstruction or the blockage of the air stream which is eventually released. There are twenty-two consonants attested in the Okun dialects. Owé and Ìjùmù and Bùnù attest nineteen with the absence of [p, ɲ and ʃ]. Ìyàgbà attests twenty consonants with the absence of [p and ʃ] but with [ɲ]. Ọwọ̀rọ̀ attests twenty-one consonants with the absence of [ɲ] and the presence of [p and ʃ]. The consonant

chart below showcases the consonants of the dialects with the ones that are not common in parenthesis.

Fig. 1 *Consonant Chart of the Okun Dialects*

|             | Bilabial | Labio-dental | Alveolar | Palato-alveolar | Palatal | Velar | Labio-velar | Glottal |
|-------------|----------|--------------|----------|-----------------|---------|-------|-------------|---------|
| Plosive     | (p) b    |              | t d      |                 |         | k g   | kp gb       |         |
| Fricative   |          | f            | s        | (ʃ)             |         | ɣ     |             | h       |
| Affricate   |          |              |          | dʒ              |         |       |             |         |
| Lateral     |          |              | l        |                 |         |       |             |         |
| Nasal       | m        |              | n        |                 | ɲ       | (ŋ)   |             |         |
| Trill       |          |              | r        |                 |         |       |             |         |
| Approximant | w        |              |          |                 | j       |       |             |         |

### Distribution of the Consonants

The consonants attested in the dialects can occur in different positions in a word. They can occur in word-initial position, word-medial position or intervocallically. Consonants do not occur word finally in all the dialects. The data below will show some of the consonants as they occur in the dialects.

#### [b] Voiced bilabial plosive

|              |            |               |              |             |                |        |
|--------------|------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|--------|
|              | <i>Owé</i> | <i>Ìyàgbà</i> | <i>Ìjùmú</i> | <i>Bùnú</i> | <i>Òwọ̀rọ̀</i> |        |
| Word Initial | bọ́        | bọ́           | bọ́          | bọ́         | bọ́            | train  |
| Word Medial  | ebi        | ebi           | ebi          | ebi         | ebi            | hunger |

#### [t] Voiceless alveolar stop

|              |      |      |      |      |      |       |
|--------------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Word initial | tà́  | tà́  | tà́  | tà́  | tà́  | sell  |
| Word Medial  | itọ́ | itọ́ | itọ́ | itọ́ | itọ́ | urine |

#### [p] Voiceless bilabial plosive

|             |  |       |         |
|-------------|--|-------|---------|
| Word Medial |  | epiya | matchet |
|-------------|--|-------|---------|

### The Vowel System

Vowels are sounds produced with very little obstruction to the air in the vocal cavity. The dialects attest both oral and nasal vowels; some of the vowels become nasalized when they are preceded by nasal sounds. Each of the dialects has seven oral vowels. While *Ìyàgbà* and *Òwọ̀rọ̀* have five nasal vowels like Standard Yoruba, the others have three nasal vowels each. The nasal vowels [ẽ̃ and ã̃] are only attested in *Ìyàgbà* and *Òwọ̀rọ̀* dialects. The diagram below showcases the vowel inventory.

### Vowel Chart of Okun Dialects

|          | Front |         | Back |       |
|----------|-------|---------|------|-------|
| High     | i     | ĩ       |      | u ã   |
| Mid-high | e     |         |      | o     |
| Mid-low  |       | ɛ ( ẽ ) |      | ɔ õ   |
| Low      |       |         |      | a (ã) |

### Phonological Change: Substitution

These dialects share correspondences both in sounds and meanings. Some phonological correspondences are noted in these dialects, some are exemplified below:

|           | <i>Owé</i> | <i>Ìyàgbà Ìjùmú</i> | <i>Bùnú</i> | <i>Òwòrò</i> |                    |
|-----------|------------|---------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------|
| f → s → h | fúré       | sáré                | háré        | híré         | sáré run           |
| f → h     | òfòn       | òfòn                | òfòn        | òfòn         | ohòn neck          |
| f → h     | funfun     | funfun              | funfun      | funfun       | hunhun white       |
| r → y     | ransé      | ransé               | ransé       | ransé        | yansé send         |
| i → u     | ìhìn       | ìhìn                | ìhìn        | ìhìn         | ìhìn knife         |
| o → a     | ọlọ        | ọlọ                 | ọlọ         | ọlọ          | alọ grinding stone |

There seems to be a rule that changes *f* to *h* in Òwòrò dialect, *r* also changes to *y* in the dialect. The *f*, *s* and *h* sound correspondences are also noted among the dialects. Owé is the only dialect that attests *u* at word initial level. It should be noted that Yoruba, which is the standard form does not allow the vowel *u* to begin a word. This is only attested in the Ekiti dialects and also in Owé.

### Tone System of Okun Dialects

Pitch variations that affect the meaning of a word are called tones. The meaning of a word depends on its tone in the majority of the languages of the world. Pike (1947:3) described a tone language as a 'language having significant and contrastive but related pitch on each syllable'. c:41) defined a tone as 'a language in which pitch is used to contrast individual lexical items or words.

Tone aids pronunciation thereby enhancing communication which is the major function of any human language. The dialects attest the high tone, low tone

and mid tone. The examples below show tonal occurrences in the dialects. The examples below indicate some tonal occurrences.

| <i>Owé</i> | <i>Ìyàgbà</i> | <i>Ìjùmú</i> | <i>Bùnú</i> | <i>Ọ̀wọ̀rọ̀</i> |        |
|------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|--------|
| kú         | kú            | kú           | kú          | kú              | die    |
| àwù        | àwù           | àwù          | àwù         | àwù             | clothe |
| funfun     | funfun        | funfun       | funfun      | hunhun          | white  |
| irun       | irun          | irun         | irun        | irun            | hair   |

### Syllable Structure of the Okun Dialects

Ladefoged (1975:244) defines a syllable as “the smallest possible unit of speech.” According to Jones (1978:55) “each sound which constitutes a peak of prominence in a word is said to contain as many syllables as the peak of prominence.” A syllable consists of one or more than one phoneme. It is a sequence of phonemes with one and only one syllabic ‘nucleus’ or ‘peak’. According to Pike (1947) a syllable consists of an ‘onset’ and a ‘core’. It is a phonological unit which consists of three phonetic parts; the onset, the peak or nucleus and the coda. There are two major types of syllables; the open syllable and the closed syllable. Okun Dialects operate the open syllable system; this means that consonants do not end words in the dialects. According to elicited data, the syllable structure of these dialects is V, CV, CVV and Ç. The syllable structure above gives credence to the fact that the dialects do not permit consonant clusters neither can a consonant end a word. The syllable structure of Okun Dialects can be generally represented as follows:

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{c} (C) \text{ V (V) } \\ \text{ Ç } \end{array} \right\}$$

### Morpheme Structure of the Okun Dialects

The morpheme structure of the Okun Dialects is dependable on the syllable structure. Monosyllabic morphemes, disyllabic morphemes, trisyllabic morphemes and quadrisyllabic morphemes are attested in the dialects. The data below will show the various morpheme structures in the dialects

#### Monosyllabic Morphemes

| <i>Owé</i> | <i>Ìyàgbà</i> | <i>Ìjùmú</i> | <i>Bùnú</i> | <i>Ọ̀wọ̀rọ̀</i> |       |
|------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|-------|
| bó         | bó            | bó           | bó          | bó              | train |
| tà         | tà            | tà           | tà          | tà              | sell  |

#### Disyllabic Morphemes

| <i>Owé</i> | <i>Ìyàgbà</i> | <i>Ìjùmú</i> | <i>Bùnú</i> | <i>Ọ̀wọ̀rọ̀</i> |       |
|------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|-------|
| ìtọ        | ìtọ           | ìtọ          | ìtọ         | ìtọ             | urine |
| ohì        | ohì           | ohì          | ohì         | ohì             | left  |
| kpukpa     | kpukpa        | kpukpa       | kpukpa      | kpikpa          | red   |

**Trisyllabic Morphemes**

|            |                     |             |              |         |        |
|------------|---------------------|-------------|--------------|---------|--------|
| <i>Owé</i> | <i>Ìyàgbà Ìjùmú</i> | <i>Bùnù</i> | <i>Òwórò</i> |         |        |
| ìdàgbòn    | ìdàgbòn             | ìdàgbòn     | ìdàgbòn      | ìdàgbòn | jaw    |
| ilèmù      | ilèmù               | ilèmù       | ilèmù        | àlèmù   | orange |
| ólúku      | ólúku               | ólúku       | ólúku        | ólúku   | friend |

**Quadrasyllabic Morphemes**

|                  |                           |                   |                    |              |          |
|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------|----------|
| <i>Owé</i> / / / | <i>Ìyàgbà Ìjùmú</i> / / / | <i>Bùnù</i> / / / | <i>Òwórò</i> / / / | / / / /      |          |
| kẹ̀tẹ̀kẹ̀tẹ̀     | kẹ̀tẹ̀kẹ̀tẹ̀              | kẹ̀tẹ̀kẹ̀tẹ̀      | kẹ̀tẹ̀kẹ̀tẹ̀       | kẹ̀tẹ̀kẹ̀tẹ̀ | horse    |
|                  |                           |                   | egunyeye           | egunyeye     | vulture  |
| pẹ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀jú      |                           |                   | pẹ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀jú        |              | forehead |
| erukutu          |                           |                   | erukutu            |              | dust     |

**Conclusion**

This paper has briefly examined the phonological systems of the Okun dialects. It has established that the dialects are distinguishable as individual dialects with their various historical and environmental experiences but they are mutually intelligible to an extent. The influences of neighbouring communities and erstwhile political taskmasters like the Nupe especially cannot be overemphasized in whatever constitutes differences in the dialects. There are so many words that are of Nupe, Hausa and Igala origin in the dialects. The most affected is the *Òwórò* dialect.

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## 44. Word-formation Processes in Nigerian English

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### **Introduction**

Everyday, new words and expressions are formed and introduced into every language (consciously and unconsciously). Many times in the course of their usage, these words and expressions undergo certain morphological processes (both inflectional and derivational), English Language is not an exception.

In a country like Nigeria where English is used as a second language these processes take a new dimension because of the contact that English has had with the existing indigenous languages. This paper seeks to examine some word formation processes in Nigerian English. Coinages and their peculiarities of usage will also be examined.

### **Background to the Study**

Some linguistic categories exist as a result of language contact. They include lexis (loanwords, coinages, acronyms, intralingual compounding, semantic extension, semantic shift, translation equivalent register, analogical derivation, ellipsis, collocational extension and reduplication); grammar (functional conversion, 'wrong' pluralization, prepositions, phrasal verbs, modal verbs); idiom, and style. For the purpose of this paper, our focus will be restricted to the processes involved in word-formation. These include coinages, intralingual compounding, reduplication etc. Nigeria has experienced a long period of contact with several missionaries, colonialists, traders etc over the centuries; this has led to what Igboanusi, (2002:2) describes as the "indigenization or nativization of English in the country" let us remind ourselves that, before these contacts came about, Nigerians already possessed and used their own indigenous languages to communicate with one another. But for interaction and communication to become possible-considering the fact that language is not static but dynamic- Nigerians had to try to understand the "strangers" among them. One day, however, the "strangers" left. This inevitably led to "the creative development of English including the evolution of distinctively Nigerian usages, attitudes, pragmatic use of the English Language..." Bamgbose (1995:11).

The English language remained one of the 'souvenirs' left behind by the colonial masters. After their departure, Nigerians were now faced with the problem of how to sustain the other edifices like Education, Religion etc. The Igbo man could not go to the market to buy goods from an Hausa trader. The Edo woman could not speak her language with the Efik woman in the office. The English language therefore became a handy tool for communicating with one another. It also necessarily became the only way to relate with one another in the

schools and in the “white collar” jobs that the colonial masters left behind. All attempts are still being made to get an acceptable endoglossic language to perform the above functions, centuries after.

Even though research has shown that English may not be spoken by more than 20% of Nigerians, Igboanusi (1997:23) notes that, “the linguistic situation in Nigeria reveals the dominance of English in terms of spread, acceptance and its official status”.

### **A Justification for Nigerian English**

The loud cry about the so-called ‘Standard English’ has raised a lot of eye brows in many linguistic quarters. What exactly does the word “standard” mean? Jowitt (1991:32) states that the word ‘standard’ is an ambiguous expression. According to him, the standard of a language might mean “... that spoken by the majority of educated people” or one which “comes to a prescribed standard of excellence”.

The more important and useful cry and need of linguistics now, it to move from the well- flogged idea of ‘standard’ vs. ‘non-standard’, ‘international’ vs ‘internal’ to more interesting and pragmatic aspects of language which is the ‘task of specifying, describing, analyzing the forms of the ... language whose data can be supplied consciously or unconsciously by a vast number of its speakers that one simply happens to come in contact with” (Jowitt 1991:35).

In this paper, we hope to do exactly that. That is, identify, examine, describe and analyze aspects of Nigerian English, the data of which have been supplied, and are still being supplied – consciously and unconsciously – by a large number of Nigerians in their daily usage.

### **What is Nigerian English?**

To answer this question, let us begin by asking further questions. What is British English, what is American English, what is Australian English?

British English, popularly referred to as Standard British English (SBE) is the kind of English spoken and written in Britain by the owners of the language – its native speakers. This English has come to be analyzed, described and accepted as the English used by all who reside in England. It has, over the centuries, move beyond the shores of Britain and is now accepted worldwide as the official English of communication.

American English is the English that is spoken and written first, in America and has been adopted as acceptable and intelligible among Americans – its native speakers and all who have come to reside there.

Australian English in the same vein, is English that has been adopted and acceptable in Australia by its native speakers. These ‘Englishes’ that have been described or defined above, are all internationally acceptable. They are not regarded as different languages.

Therefore, Nigerian English is the kind of English spoken and written in Nigeria, which has become acceptable, or is in the process of becoming acceptable and intelligible among Nigerians. This variety of English is also being adapted

gradually and out of necessity to the needs of Nigerians. In spite of the frowns by some that, Nigerian English does not exist; the above definitions of British English, American English and Australian English, qualify the variety evolving in Nigeria as Nigerian English. Therefore, it is a variety of English.

A variety of a language “can be thought of as one of the many general and complete language systems, each used by a substantial number of people and each possessing characteristics that distinguish it from other systems without requiring it to be classified as a different language” Jowitt (1991:37). It is in this sense that BrE, AmE, AusE and NigE can be regarded as varieties of English. As Jowitt (1991:37) observes, “varieties themselves can be classified using different parameters, National (AmE, BrE, etc.) Regional (Scottish, Queens English..., etc.).

This is not the focus of this paper. Even though the GOAL of learning, especially in our educational institutions is the standard British English, the realistic OUTCOME of learning is for most learners in Nigeria, the Intralanguage – PNE (Jowitt:57).

This is not surprising because, languages are still in contact both in Nigeria and in the Nigerians themselves who live there. If a Nigerian was born and raised in Britain and interacted, all his life, with only native speakers of English, and had not acquired any other language before the English language, then that Nigerian would not talk about Nigerian English. But for the Nigerian who is striving to attain both linguistic (langue) and performative (parole) competence, and who still resides in Nigeria, and still uses his indigenous language (which he acquired before English), and still hears and reads English spoken and written by non-native speakers of English, the case of the existence or/and evolution of Nigerian English is not in controversy here. Nigerian English has special features, so does BrE, AmE, AusE. Nigerian English vocabulary contains (understandably) “a large number of words which aren’t found in the standard British English or are used in ways peculiar to the Nigerian situation ...” (Igboanusi 2002:14).

### **Word-formation Processes in Nigerian English**

Linguists believe that the kinds of Word-formation processes that take place in Nigerian English may not be unrelated to the educational and social standing of the speakers, subject matter, medium, attitude and interference. This may account for why some words and expressions are formed and used more rapidly and more regularly than others.

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973:7) note that, “the trace left by someone’s native language upon the foreign language he has acquired...” will affect the nature of words and expressions formed.

### **What is Word-formation?**

Just as the name implies, word-formation is the formation of words. In every language, new words and expression are formed freely in order to meet one need or the other. Sometimes, some of these words and expressions are given new meanings. Some are adapted into already existing words. Some are “so

widespread in a community and of such long standing that they have become stable and adequate enough” Greenbaum (:3) to be used by a majority of members of that community. Bamgbose identifies three aspects of their usage- the linguistic, pragmatic and creative. The creative aspect is our concern in this paper.

Quirk and Greenbaum (430ff) put word-formation processes in English into seven categories. We shall look at Nigerian English using these seven categories.

### **Affixation**

This is the process of adding an affix (usually a morpheme) to the base of any word in order to derive another word. The derived word may, in turn, become a base for another word. Thus, words of considerable morphological and semantic complexity “can be derived” - Quirk and Greenbaum (p. 430) as in the word, “unfriendliness”, where “friend” is the base word while the affixes “un”, ‘li’ and “ness” have been added to derive a completely different word. When these affixes are added before the word, the process is called “prefixation” and the words that are added are referred to as prefixes, whereas when the affixes are added after, the process is known as “suffixation”, the morphemes added are called suffixes. In Nigerian English base words also go through morphological processes as illustrated below:

| <b>Nigerian English</b> | <b>Base word</b>                                | <b>Process</b>                                    | <b>Remarks</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hollandais              | Holland                                         | Suffixization<br>–‘ais’ is the suffix added       | Holland is the name of a country in Europe. Nigerians have given the name ‘hollandis’ to a particular type of fabric manufactured in Holland & exported to Nigeria. it is used mainly by the Igbo-speaking areas of Nigeria      |
| Jambite                 | Jamb (joint Admissions and Matriculation Board) | Acronymy and Suffixation.<br>‘ite’ has been added | ‘Jamb’ itself is an acronym which has gone through a further word-formation process to derive the word ‘Jambite’.                                                                                                                |
| Lagosian                | Lagos                                           | Suffixation                                       | ‘lan’ has been added to the base word                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Practicalize            | Practice                                        | Suffixation                                       | Two suffixes ‘al’ and “ize” have been added to the base word.                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Red-carded              | Red card                                        | Suffixation                                       | ‘Red card’ which is a noun now has a derived form (verb) from it which is peculiarly Nigerian                                                                                                                                    |
| Academician             | i. academy<br>ii. academic                      | Suffixation                                       | In BrE an academician is a member of an academy. Here, ‘academic’, is used as a base word and the suffix ‘ian’ has been added to mean one who either lectures in an institution of higher learning or, one who is well educated. |

Many of these coinages are a result of the conscious and/or unconscious knowledge of affixation in British English. For instance, Nigerians are aware that

such words as ‘overreact’, ‘Nigerian’, verbalize’ etc, exist in English, so they do not understand why the same rules cannot apply to ‘Jambite’, ‘Lagosian’, ‘Practicalize’, etc.

### **Conversion**

This is a process of derivation in English where a lexical item or word changes its class without any suffix or prefix added to it. For example, the word ‘red-card’ mentioned above was used as a verb. Other examples include

| <b>Lexical Item</b> | <b>BrEnglish</b>                                                                                                                                     | <b>Nigerian English</b>                             |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Horn             | Noun e.g. “The car has a loud horn”                                                                                                                  | Verb e.g. “why don’t you horn for him?”             |
| 2. Jealous          | Adj. eg “she’s a very jealous girl”                                                                                                                  | Verb e.g. “He jealoused me because I scored an ‘A’” |
| 3. Minus            | Preposition used in Mathematics eg. 17 minus 5 is 12. A noun, showing that a number is less than another number or, something that is a disadvantage | Verb e.g. “He minused two from my marks”.           |
| 4. Eyeing           | N/A                                                                                                                                                  | Used as a verb e.g. “She was eyeing me”.            |

### **Compounding**

This is the process of bringing together two or more base words in order to form another word entirely. Some of these new words are written together, some are written separately and others are hyphenated e.g. ‘Playboy’, ‘washing machine’, ‘brother-in-law’. They are called compounds. Compounding is one of the most productive types of word-formation processes in any language.

In Nigerian English, Igboanusi (2002:2) refers to this process as “Intra-lingual compounding ... a creative nativization that manifests in the use of expressions which are coined to reflect the Nigerian world view”.

The compound words formed in Nigerian English are used for the general purposes that are understood by the Nigerians who use them. Examples are:

| <b>Nigerian English Words</b> | <b>Usage</b>                        |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Gate fee                      | (n) admission fee                   |
| Go-slow                       | (n) traffic jam                     |
| Head-tie                      | (n) scarf                           |
| Motor park                    | (n) bus or taxi station             |
| Abuja yam                     | (n) a type of yam grown in Abuja    |
| Acada woman                   | (n) a well-educated woman           |
| Bad eye                       | (n) to look with evil interest      |
| Bad bele                      | (n) to bear grudge against someone  |
| Buttom power                  | (n) a woman’s influence on a man    |
| Bamboo-bed                    | (n) a type of wooden bed            |
| Cash madam                    | (n) a rich of and influential woman |
| Ghana-must-go                 | (n) a type of bag                   |



|                     |                                                                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Husband- snatcher   | (n) a flirt who dates a married man                                     |
| Long throat         | (n) greed, a greedy person                                              |
| Draw soup           | (n) a type of soup                                                      |
| Bend-down-boutique  | (n) a shop where used clothes or items are sold                         |
|                     | (n) to be influenced                                                    |
| Long- leg           | (n) a type of alcoholic drink                                           |
| Hot drink           | (n) a man who is controlled by a woman, especially by a wife            |
| Woman- wrapper      | (n) a type of fried snail                                               |
| Congo meat          | (n) cold                                                                |
| Running nose        | (n) dysentery or diarrhea                                               |
| Running stomach     | (n) flattery: flatterer                                                 |
| Sweet- mouth        | (n) members of the extended family                                      |
| Home people         | (adj) dark-skinned                                                      |
| Black-in-complexion | (n) films/ movies produced, directed and acted in Nigeria by Nigerians. |
| Home video          |                                                                         |

### Reduplication

Reduplication is another word-formation process in Nigerian English where words are reduplicated for-emphasis, pluralization or for the purpose of creating new meanings. Igboanusi (2006:23) observes that reduplication in Nigerian English... is “generally influenced by the indigenous languages and pidgin”. According to Quirk and Greenbaum (1976:441), ‘most reduplicatives are highly informal...’ They comprise two or more elements that look or sound either identical or are slightly different in initial, medial or final consonant. In Nigerian English, words are derived or formed mainly for emphasis. Examples include:

| Nigerian English Words | Meaning                                                                                               |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| * 55 (five five)       | 505 – a type of Peugeot car                                                                           |
| * Before before        | Long time ago                                                                                         |
| * Half half            | Half each eg.<br>‘give them half half’                                                                |
| * Now now              | Immediately; right away eg.<br>‘I am coming to your house now now’                                    |
| * Small small          | Take it easy; little bits eg.<br>‘climb that ladder small small’<br>‘ give them small small biscuits’ |
| * Well well            | Very well; properly eg.<br>‘Mary swept the room well well’.                                           |

### Clipping

This process involves the removal of one, two or more parts of a word, usually a syllable. Words are usually clipped at the beginning, end or both beginning and end. The clipped form is used in both formal and informal settings eg:

| Before Clipping | Clipped Form |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Transport       | Trans        |
| Academic        | Acada        |

|              |        |
|--------------|--------|
| Youth Corper | Corper |
| Wine Taper   | Taper  |
| Refrigerator | Fridge |

Once the clipped form of the word is understood and acknowledged by its users, it gradually finds its way into the repertoire or lexicon of those who use them.

### **Blending**

This has to do with fragmenting one of more syllables in a word(s) and bringing them together to form a new word. Like in the English words, ‘motel’, ‘transistor’, ‘brunch’, etc. Nigerian English also uses this process to form new words as the need arises. This is usually short-lived and not used frequently in formal speech or writings. Blends have a very slow rate of acceptance. An example is ‘wounjure’, a blend consisting of the first syllable from the word ‘wound’ and the second syllable from the word; ‘injure’. Another is “impossicant” a blend formed from the lexical items, “impossible” and “cannot”.

This blend - ‘impossicant’ is used here, to emphasize the magnitude of impossibility that the speaker or writer is referring to e.g. “My mother can never travel by air”, it’s impossicant”. Nigerian English blends are used among the uneducated, or sometimes, used among the educated for the purpose of creating humour.

### **Acronymy**

This is perhaps the most productive process of word-formation in Nigerian English. Every where in the world, acronyms are freely produced and used among people in a community to refer to names of organizations, institutions, bodies etc. Some are accepted internationally. Longman Dictionary of contemporary English defines an acronym as “a new word made up from the first letters of the name of something such as an organization” (2001:12). Sometimes they are produced as “sequences of letters... where the letters represent full words e.g. UN (United Nations) or as letters representing elements in a compound e.g. ‘Radar’ from ‘radio detecting and ranging’ – (Quirk and Greenbaum 1976:449).

It will not be an overstatement to say that Nigerian English acronyms are produced daily – in government, on university campuses, in the market place, in the shops, at home etc. They are understood by the users and they have become a major and important part of the variety of English spoken and written in Nigeria. Many of them are produced out of need or necessity. This shows the dynamic natures of any language – Nigeria English inclusive.

Those produced as sequences of letters are:

|      |                                  |
|------|----------------------------------|
| FCT  | Federal Capital Territory        |
| PHCN | Power Holding Company of Nigeria |
| CBN  | Central Bank of Nigeria          |
| NYSC | National Youth Service Corp.     |
| APC  | Arewa Peoples’ Congress          |

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|      |                                    |
|------|------------------------------------|
| NDDC | Niger Delta Development Commission |
| JJC  | Johnny Just Come                   |
| LGA  | Local Government Area              |

Those produced as words are:

|        |                                                          |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| NITEL  | Nigerian Telecommunications                              |
| NIPOST | Nigerian Postal                                          |
| NECO   | National Examination Council                             |
| FERMA  | Federal Road Maintenance Agency                          |
| PFN    | Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria                        |
| INEC   | Independent National Electoral Commission                |
| NAFDAC | National Agency for Food Drug Administration and Control |
| WAEC   | West African Examinations Council                        |
| CAN    | Christian Association of Nigeria                         |
| ASUU   | Academic Staff Union of University                       |
| SAN    | Senior Advocate of Nigeria                               |

This list is by no way exhaustive. All the acronyms produced daily could make up volumes of books.

### **Conclusion**

Nigerian English has come to stay and there is nothing anyone can do about it. No Nigerian is ready to unlearn many of the creative and productive Nigerian English expressions that have become adapted to his lexicon. Let us therefore seek ways of describing and ‘advertising’ our own variety so it becomes internationally acknowledged just like any other language in the world. Nigerian English is dynamic. Let’s heed the advice of Igboanusi (2002:14), “as more and more Nigerians from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds now write and speak English... it becomes necessary to reflect in a reasonably organized manner as much as possible, the richness and diversity of Nigerian English”.

This is part of what this paper has tried to do. It has tried to describe, not prescribe. Does Nigerian English exist? Yes! Is there one national variety? No!

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## 45. Noun Class Vestiges in Odual<sup>1</sup>

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This paper discusses the noun class system of Odual, a Delta Cross language spoken in southeastern Nigeria. It establishes, on the basis of alternating, semantically determined prefixes, that Odual is a (vestigial) noun class language (cf. Dixon 1986). The paper notes that there are eleven (11) singular, eight (8) plural and seven (7) single class prefixes, a combination of which yields thirty-three (33) genders. The semantic content of the genders are examined, and found out that nouns designate man-made objects, (lower) animals, human relationships, parts of the body, liquids, natural phenomena, plant/plant parts, Mass (uncountable entities), or people with special social status. The bloated number of genders in Odual is unusual when compared with other Delta Cross languages on which data are available.

### 0. Introduction

Odual is a Central Delta language spoken by the Odual community in Abual-Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State of Nigeria. Odual is coordinate with other Delta Cross languages such as Obulom, Ogbia and Ogbronuagum. These languages with which Odual is coordinate are also spoken in Rivers State of Nigeria, except Ogbia, which is spoken in Bayelsa State of Nigeria. There is a dearth of scholarly linguistic literature on these languages in comparison with languages such as Degema, Kalabari, Obolo, and Izon. The major linguistic study on Odual is Comson (1987), which provides a detailed description of the phonology of this language. Other materials on Odual include Gardner et al. (1974) and Gardner (1975).

The noun class system of Odual is particularly interesting when considered in the light of other Delta cross languages. Investigation reveals that in terms of the number of genders found in these languages, Odual appears to have the largest number. Whereas Ogbronuagum has twenty genders (Kari 2000), Obulom twenty-six (Ngeripaka 2000) and Ogbia (Agholo)<sup>2</sup> nine (Isukul 2006), Odual has thirty-three.

### 1. The Vowel System of Odual

There are twenty phonemic vowels in Odual (Comson 1987). Of this number, ten are short oral vowels /  u/, while ten are long oral vowels /  uu:/. These vowels are further divided into two sets, expanded [+ATR]<sup>3</sup> and non-expanded [-ATR]:



Table 1. *Phonemic Vowels of Odual*

| +ATR | -ATR |
|------|------|
| u uu |      |

The two sets of vowels do not co-occur in simple words in Odual. There are, however, a few exceptional cases to which this predominant rule does not apply. Gardner et al. (1974:9) note that ‘there are a limited number of words, most of which contain the vowel ‘e’ ( ) (and (e)) in which both heavy [+ATR] and light [-ATR] vowels occur together so that there is no vowel harmony’ (parentheses and brackets, mine). The words **áráá-kpé**<sup>4</sup> ‘trouble’ and **əle-ké** ‘leg’ are illustrative examples.

The vowels of the stem determine the quality of the vowels of noun prefixes. In other words, if the vowels of the stem are [+ATR], the vowel of the prefixes will also be [+ATR]. Conversely, if the vowels of the stem are [-ATR], those of noun prefixes will also be [-ATR]. Some illustrative examples are **ǎ-ném** ‘tongue’ (sg), **ǎrá-ném** ‘tongues’ (pl), and **a-lɛɛɣ** ‘jaw’ (sg), **asɪ-lɛɛɣ** ‘jaws’.

Apart from general concord marking whereby a verb takes a prefix, which agrees with the subject in person and number, there is no concordial agreement in which concord marking prefixes have a phonological shape which is identical or nearly identical to the noun class marker (cf. Swahili, Lyons 1968:285 and Sesotho, Demuth et al. 1986:456). Such cases, if they exist, are purely accidental. For this reason, the discussion in this paper will be limited only to noun prefixes.

## 2. Noun Classes

There are eleven singular classes, eight plural classes and seven single classes. Noun prefixes predominantly have the following structures: V- and VCV-. Forms such as VCVmU- and VCVrU- are also attested but these occur only in the plural. Prefixation in the plural requires the replacement of the singular prefix with a plural prefix. Where the prefix of the singular noun consists of two identical vowels, the first of these vowels is deleted before the plural prefix. The different noun classes are presented below:

Table 2. *Odual Noun Class Marking Prefixes*

| Singular Prefixes  | Plural Prefixes | Single Class prefixes |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| A(A)- <sup>5</sup> | ArA-            | A(A)-                 |
| A U-               | ArI-            | A U-                  |
| A I-               | AsI-            | AIU-                  |
| AIV-               | AsU-            | E(E)-                 |

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|       |        |       |
|-------|--------|-------|
| AlU-  | AsUmU- | I(I)- |
| All-  | ArU-   | O-    |
| E(E)- | AbUrU- | U(U)- |
| I-    | I-     |       |
| O(O)- |        |       |
| O U-  |        |       |
| U-    |        |       |

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### 3. Genders in Odual

As was stated earlier, Odual has eleven singular classes, eight plural classes and seven single classes. A combination of these classes yields thirty-three genders. In what follows, we present the different genders and a discussion of the semantic content of each of the genders.

#### 3.1. A(A)-/ArA-

This is a large gender comprising nouns whose semantic content includes (lower) animals, man-made objects, natural phenomena, abstract, body parts, plant parts, and human relationships:

|     |                   |                |                           |   |
|-----|-------------------|----------------|---------------------------|---|
| (a) | (lower) animals   | - <sup>6</sup> | ‘iguana’                  | - |
|     |                   | -              | ‘big green mamba’         | - |
|     |                   | -              | ‘bees (swarm of)’         | - |
|     |                   | -              | ‘big short-tailed monkey’ | - |
| (b) | man-made objects  | -              | ‘ladle’                   | - |
|     |                   | - u u          | ‘guitar’                  | - |
|     |                   | -              | ‘garden round house’      | - |
|     |                   | -              | ‘paint’                   | - |
| (c) | natural phenomena | -              | ‘flood’                   | - |
|     |                   | -              | ‘weather, period’         | - |
|     |                   | - u u          | ‘life’                    | - |
|     |                   | -              | ‘land’                    | - |
| (d) | parts of the body | -              | ‘tongue’                  | - |
|     |                   | -              | ‘eye’                     | - |

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|     |                           |                         |   |
|-----|---------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| (e) | plant/plant parts         |                         |   |
|     | -                         | 'oil-palm'              | - |
|     | -                         | 'calabash'              | - |
|     | -                         | 'red pepper'            | - |
| (f) | human/human relationships |                         |   |
|     | -                         | 'woman'                 | - |
|     | -                         | 'grandmother'           | - |
|     | -                         | 'relations, cousins'    | - |
|     | -                         | 'male elderly relative' | - |

### 3.2. A-/ArI-

This is a small gender that is made of nouns designating man-made objects and abstract nouns:

|     |                  |               |   |
|-----|------------------|---------------|---|
| (a) | man-made objects |               |   |
|     | -                | 'wine'        | - |
|     | -                | 'fire'        | - |
| (b) | abstract nouns   |               |   |
|     | -                | 'petty theft' | - |

### 3.3. A(A)-

This is a single class gender that is made up mainly of abstract nouns, a few nouns designating human relationships, natural phenomena, and mass nouns:

|     |                |                   |  |
|-----|----------------|-------------------|--|
| (a) | abstract nouns |                   |  |
|     | -              | 'today'           |  |
|     | -              | 'truth'           |  |
|     | -              | 'patience'        |  |
|     | -              | 'advice, warning' |  |
|     | - u u u        | 'toil, suffering' |  |
|     | -              | 'time'            |  |
|     | -              | 'urine'           |  |
|     | - uu u         | 'fear'            |  |
|     | -              | 'games'           |  |
|     | - u u          | 'folktale(s)'     |  |
|     | -              | 'name'            |  |

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|     |                     |                      |  |
|-----|---------------------|----------------------|--|
|     | -                   | ‘selfishness’        |  |
|     | - β                 | ‘hunting’            |  |
|     | -                   | ‘trouble’            |  |
| (b) | human relationships |                      |  |
|     | -                   | ‘relations, cousins’ |  |
| (c) | natural phenomena   |                      |  |
|     | -                   | ‘sun’                |  |
|     | -                   | ‘rainbow’            |  |
|     | -                   | ‘heaven, sky’        |  |
| (d) | mass nouns          |                      |  |
|     | - β                 | ‘salt’               |  |
|     | -                   | ‘honey’              |  |
|     | -                   | ‘hair’               |  |
|     | -                   | ‘hair of body’       |  |

### 3.4. A-/AsI-

The semantic content of this fairly mixed gender includes nouns designating lower animals, body/body parts, plants, man-made objects, a few abstract nouns:

|     |                  |                    |   |
|-----|------------------|--------------------|---|
| (a) | lower animals    |                    |   |
|     | -                | ‘electric fish’    | - |
|     | -                | ‘porcupine’        | - |
|     | -                | ‘dog’              | - |
|     | -                | ‘grass-cutter’     | - |
|     | -                | ‘chicken’          | - |
| (b) | body/body parts  |                    |   |
|     | -                | ‘jaw’              | - |
|     | - β              | ‘fingernail, claw’ | - |
|     | -                | ‘body’             | - |
| (c) | plants           |                    |   |
|     | - β              | ‘iroko tree’       | - |
| (d) | man-made objects |                    |   |
|     | -                | ‘large cask’       | - |

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|     |                |           |   |
|-----|----------------|-----------|---|
|     | -              | ‘gun’     | - |
|     | -              | ‘pond’    | - |
| (e) | abstract nouns |           |   |
|     | -              | ‘proverb’ | - |

### 3.5. A-/AsU-

This gender comprises nouns designating (lower) animals, man-made objects, and body parts. Some mass and abstract nouns also belong to this gender:

|     |                     |               |    |
|-----|---------------------|---------------|----|
| (a) | (lower) animals     |               |    |
|     | - u u               | ‘tortoise’    | -  |
|     | - u                 | ‘bush pig’    | -  |
|     | - u                 | ‘house bat’   | -  |
| (b) | man-made objects    |               |    |
|     | - uu                | ‘cooking pot’ | -  |
|     | -                   | ‘knife’       | -  |
|     | -                   | ‘bow’         | -  |
| (c) | body parts          |               |    |
|     | -                   | ‘finger’      | -  |
| (d) | mass/abstract nouns |               |    |
|     | - β                 | ‘soup’        | u- |
|     | -                   | ‘smoke’       | -  |
|     | -                   | ‘witchcraft’  | -  |

### 3.6. A-/ArU-

Lower animals, natural phenomena, and man-made objects make up this gender:

|     |                   |                                                  |    |
|-----|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----|
| (a) | (lower) animals   |                                                  |    |
|     | -                 | ‘maggot’ (hard, whitish, tasteless)              | u- |
|     | -                 | ‘maggot’ (soft, yellowish, fatty, edible, tasty) | -  |
|     | -                 | ‘horse’                                          | -  |
| (b) | natural phenomena |                                                  |    |
|     | - u               | ‘day’                                            | u- |

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|     |                  |       |                        |
|-----|------------------|-------|------------------------|
| (c) | man-made objects |       |                        |
|     | - u u            | ‘axe’ | u-;<br>u- <sup>7</sup> |

### 3.7. AyI-/AsUmU-

This is a very small gender comprising nouns designating parts of the body. Only one item is found here: **əyi-siy** ‘face’, **əsumu-**

### 3.8. AIV-/AsI-

This gender is made up of nouns designating lower animals, few body parts, and plant/plant parts:

|     |                    |               |          |
|-----|--------------------|---------------|----------|
| (a) | lower animals      |               |          |
|     | -                  | ‘crab’        | -        |
|     | -                  | ‘small wasp’  | -        |
| (b) | parts of the body  |               |          |
|     | -                  | ‘leg’         | - -<br>8 |
| (c) | plants/plant parts |               |          |
|     | -                  | ‘leaf’        | -        |
|     | - β                | ‘rattan cane’ | -        |
|     | -                  | ‘bamboo’      | -        |

### 3.9. AIU-/AsU-

This is a very small gender that is made up of nouns designating man-made objects and lower animals:

|     |                  |                                                       |    |
|-----|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----|
| (a) | body parts       |                                                       |    |
|     | u-βuuβ           | ‘feather’                                             | u- |
| (b) | man-made objects |                                                       |    |
|     | u- u             | ‘planks arranged horizontally for sitting in a canoe’ | u- |
| (c) | lower animals    |                                                       |    |
|     | -                | ‘allied hornbill’                                     | -  |

### 3.10. AyU-

This single class gender comprises abstract nouns: Only one item is found here: **ayusân** ‘grace, mercy’



**3.11. AII-/I-**

Lower animals and plants make up this gender:

- |     |               |              |   |
|-----|---------------|--------------|---|
| (a) | lower animals |              |   |
|     | -             | ‘mouse, rat’ | - |
| (b) | plant parts   |              |   |
|     | -             | ‘wood’       | - |

**3.12. AIU-**

This single class gender is made up of abstract nouns. Only one item is found here: **alu-kpɔ** ‘old-age’

**3.13. E(E)-/I-**

Nouns in this fairly large gender include those designating lower animals, and a few man-made objects and plants/plant parts:

- |     |                    |                  |      |
|-----|--------------------|------------------|------|
| (a) | lower animals      |                  |      |
|     | -                  | ‘bed-bug’        | -    |
|     | - uu               | ‘soldier-ant’    | -    |
|     | - uu               | ‘louse’          | -    |
|     | -                  | ‘fish’           | -    |
|     | -                  | ‘leech’          | -    |
|     | -                  | ‘worm’           | -    |
|     | -                  | ‘mosquito’       | -, - |
|     | -                  | ‘bird’           | -    |
|     | -                  | ‘leech’          | -    |
| (b) | man-made objects   |                  |      |
|     | - u                | ‘coal, charcoal’ | -    |
|     | -                  | ‘bead’           | -    |
| (c) | plants/plant parts |                  |      |
|     | -                  | ‘orange’         | -, - |

**3.14. E(E)-/ArI-**

This is a small gender consisting mainly of nouns designating parts of the body, man-made objects, and some lower animals:

- |     |            |        |   |
|-----|------------|--------|---|
| (a) | body parts |        |   |
|     | -          | ‘knee’ | - |

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|     |                  |              |   |
|-----|------------------|--------------|---|
|     | -                | ‘heart’      | - |
|     | -                | ‘heel’       | - |
| (b) | man-made objects |              |   |
|     | -                | ‘box’        | - |
|     | -                | ‘food’       | - |
|     | -                | ‘heap’       | - |
|     | -                | ‘plantation’ | - |
| (c) | lower animals    |              |   |
|     | -        β       | ‘crocodile’  | - |

**3.15. E(E)-/ArA-**

This fairly large gender includes nouns designating natural phenomena, man-made objects, parts of the body, (lower) animals, and plants and mass nouns:

|     |                    |                             |            |
|-----|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| (a) | natural phenomena  |                             |            |
|     | -        u         | ‘August break’              | -          |
|     | -        β         | ‘rain’                      | -          |
|     | -                  | ‘forest’                    | -          |
| (b) | man-made objects   |                             |            |
|     | -                  | ‘road’                      | -          |
|     | -                  | ‘loaf’                      | -          |
|     | -                  | ‘machete’                   | -        9 |
| (c) | parts of the body  |                             |            |
|     | -                  | ‘forehead’                  | -          |
|     | -                  | ‘foot, sole, hand,<br>palm’ | -          |
|     | -                  | ‘occiput’                   | -          |
| (c) | (lower) animals    |                             |            |
|     | -                  | ‘gorilla’                   | -          |
|     | -βu        u       | ‘gaboon viper’              | -          |
| (d) | plants/plant parts |                             |            |
|     | -                  | ‘kind of tree’              | -          |
| (e) | abstract/liquid    |                             |            |
|     | -                  | ‘foolishness’               | -          |
|     | -                  | ‘sweat’                     | -          |

**3.16. E(E)-/ArU-**

This is another fairly large gender comprising nouns designating man-made objects, lower animals, a few parts of the body, human relationships, and mass and abstract nouns:

|                         |  |                                                                 |    |
|-------------------------|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| (a) man-made objects    |  |                                                                 |    |
| -βu                     |  | ‘trap’                                                          | u- |
| - u                     |  | ‘a kind of basket fish trap with a stick to shut off the cover’ | u- |
| - u u                   |  | ‘covered basket’                                                | u- |
| -                       |  | ‘bag’                                                           | -  |
| (b) lower animals       |  |                                                                 |    |
| - u                     |  | ‘scaleless fish’                                                | u- |
| - u u                   |  | ‘pigeon’                                                        | u- |
| (c) parts of the body   |  |                                                                 |    |
| - u                     |  | ‘anus, vagina’                                                  | u- |
| (d) human relationships |  |                                                                 |    |
| - u u                   |  | ‘family’                                                        | u- |
| -                       |  | ‘slave’                                                         | -  |
| (e) mass/abstract nouns |  |                                                                 |    |
| - u                     |  | ‘bush’                                                          | u- |
| -                       |  | ‘spirit, soul’                                                  | -  |
| - u                     |  | ‘smell’                                                         | u- |

**3.17. E-/AsUmU-**

Nouns designating man-made objects belong to this gender. Only one item is found here: **ε-γϵêl** ‘a kind of basket fish trap’ **asomu-**

**3.18. E(E)-**

This is a single class gender consisting of abstract and mass nouns:

|   |   |             |
|---|---|-------------|
| - |   | ‘pains’     |
| - |   | ‘riches’    |
| - | - | ‘behaviour’ |
| - |   | ‘light’     |
| - |   | ‘dirt’      |
| - |   | ‘fat’       |
| - |   | ‘cloud(s)’  |

**3.19. I(I)-**

This is a fairly large single class gender comprising nouns designating parts of the body, lower animals, human relationships, plants/plant parts, natural phenomena, man-made objects, and mass and abstract nouns:

- |     |                     |                                |
|-----|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| (a) | parts of the body   |                                |
|     | -                   | ‘side of body’                 |
|     | - u                 | ‘calf of leg’                  |
|     | -                   | ‘brain’                        |
| (b) | lower animals       |                                |
|     | -                   | ‘a kind of insect in the bush’ |
| (c) | human relationships |                                |
|     | -                   | ‘procession’                   |
|     | -                   | ‘marriage’                     |
|     | -                   | ‘stranger, guest’              |
| (d) | plant/plant parts   |                                |
|     | - u                 | ‘elephant grass’               |
|     | -                   | ‘seeds of bush mango’          |
| (e) | man-made objects    |                                |
|     | - u                 | ‘clothes’                      |
|     | -                   | ‘garden’                       |
| (f) | mass/abstract nouns |                                |
|     | -                   | ‘rice’                         |
|     | -                   | ‘blood’                        |
|     | -                   | ‘saliva’                       |
|     | -                   | ‘trouble’                      |
|     | -                   | ‘deceit’                       |
|     | - u u               | ‘question’                     |
|     | -                   | ‘lies, lying’                  |
|     | -                   | ‘happiness’                    |

**3.20. I-/ArI-**

Nouns in this gender include those designating parts of the body, man-made objects, a few human relationships, and mass and abstract nouns:

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|    |                     |   |
|----|---------------------|---|
| -  | ‘nose’              | - |
| -β | ‘armpit’            | - |
| -  | ‘padlock’           | - |
| -  | ‘brass waist chain’ | - |
| -  | ‘ladder’            | - |
| -  | ‘marriage’          | - |
| -  | ‘tears’             | - |
| -  | ‘vow(s), oath(s)’   | - |

### 3.21. **O(O)-I-**

This is a fairly large gender consisting of nouns designating (lower) animals, plants/plant parts, parts of the body, people with special social statuses, and man-made objects:

#### (a) (lower) animals

|     |                    |      |
|-----|--------------------|------|
| -   | ‘large tsetsefly’  | -    |
| -   | ‘python’           | - -  |
| - u | ‘big frog’         | -    |
| -   | ‘small flying ant’ | -    |
| -   | ‘bee’              | -    |
| -   | ‘mudwasp’          | -, - |
| -   | ‘frog (small)’     | -    |
| -   | ‘fruit bat’        | -, - |

#### (b) plants/plant parts

|     |                                                    |   |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------|---|
| - u | ‘thorn’                                            | - |
| -β  | ‘large tree’                                       | - |
| -   | ‘young oil palm’                                   | - |
| -   | ‘a kind of plant that produces red latex when cut’ | - |
| -   | ‘maize’                                            | - |

#### (b) parts of the body

|     |         |       |
|-----|---------|-------|
| - u | ‘neck’  | -, u- |
| -   | ‘mouth’ | -     |

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|     |                                   |                     |    |    |
|-----|-----------------------------------|---------------------|----|----|
| (c) | things/people with special status |                     |    |    |
|     | -                                 | ‘corpse’            | -, | -  |
|     | -β                                | ‘useless person’    | -  |    |
|     | -                                 | ‘hunter’            | -, | -  |
|     | -                                 | ‘baby nurse’        | -  |    |
|     | -                                 | ‘servant’           | -  |    |
|     | -                                 | ‘oldest son’        | -, | -  |
| (d) | man-made objects                  |                     |    |    |
|     | - u                               | ‘nail’              | -, | -  |
|     | -                                 | ‘money’             | -  |    |
|     | -                                 | ‘needle’            | -  |    |
|     | -β                                | ‘book’              | -  |    |
| (e) | mass/abstract nouns               |                     |    |    |
|     | -βu                               | ‘dust’              | -, | u- |
|     | -                                 | ‘shadow’            | -, | -  |
|     | -                                 | ‘emptiness, vanity’ | -  |    |

### 3.22. O(O)-/ArU-

This is another fairly large gender consisting of nouns designating parts of the body, man-made objects, people/things with special statuses, (lower) animals, and mass and abstract nouns:

|     |                                   |                      |    |   |
|-----|-----------------------------------|----------------------|----|---|
| (a) | body parts                        |                      |    |   |
|     | - u                               | ‘navel’              | u- |   |
|     | -                                 | ‘stomach, abdomen’   | -  |   |
|     | -β                                | ‘shoulder’           | -  |   |
| (b) | man-made objects                  |                      |    |   |
|     | - uu                              | ‘canoe’              | u- |   |
|     | - u                               | ‘pit’                | u- |   |
|     | -                                 | ‘musical instrument’ | -  |   |
| (c) | things/people with special status |                      |    |   |
|     | - u                               | ‘grave’              | u- |   |
|     | -                                 | ‘witch’              | -, | - |



|     |                     |                   |       |
|-----|---------------------|-------------------|-------|
|     | -                   | 'thief'           | -     |
|     | -                   | 'chief, rich man' | -     |
| (d) | (lower) animals     |                   |       |
|     | - u u               | 'ram'             | u-    |
|     | -                   | 'leopard'         | -     |
| (e) | abstract/mass nouns |                   |       |
|     | - u                 | 'promise'         | u-, - |
|     | -                   | 'quarrel'         | -     |
|     | -                   | 'rust'            | -     |
|     | -                   | 'mud on the road' | -     |

### 3.23. O(O)-/ArA-

This fairly large and mixed gender consists of nouns designating man-made objects, parts of the body, plants, some (lower) animals, some natural phenomena, some people with special social statuses, and some abstract nouns:

|     |                   |                        |          |
|-----|-------------------|------------------------|----------|
| (a) | man-made objects  |                        |          |
|     | -                 | 'gong'                 | -        |
|     | -                 | 'divining frame'       | -        |
|     | -                 | 'log stool'            | -, -, u- |
|     | - β               | 'broom'                | -        |
| (b) | body parts        |                        |          |
|     | -β                | 'horn (on animal)      | -        |
|     | -                 | 'lip'                  | -        |
| (c) | (lower) animals   |                        |          |
|     | -                 | 'large hawk'           | -        |
|     | -                 | 'small spider'         | -        |
|     | -β                | 'pig'                  | -        |
| (d) | plants            |                        |          |
|     | -                 | 'type of cocoyam'      | -        |
|     | -                 | 'kind of (small) tree' | -        |
| (e) | natural phenomena |                        |          |
|     | -                 | 'wave(s)'              | -        |
|     | -                 | 'dry season'           | -        |

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|     |                       |               |   |
|-----|-----------------------|---------------|---|
| (f) | special social status |               |   |
|     | -                     | ‘dumb person’ | - |
| (g) | abstract nouns        |               |   |
|     | -                     | ‘cough’       | - |

### 3.24. **O-/ArI-**

This is a fairly large gender comprising nouns designating natural phenomena, lower animals, some people with special social statuses, and some man-made objects:

|     |                              |                               |   |
|-----|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| (a) | natural phenomena            |                               |   |
|     | -                            | ‘storm wind’                  | - |
|     | -                            | ‘stream, spring, small creek’ | - |
|     | -β                           | ‘river’                       | - |
|     | -                            | ‘dew’                         | - |
| (b) | lower animals                |                               |   |
|     | -                            | ‘snake’                       | - |
|     | -                            | ‘shark’                       | - |
|     | -                            | ‘hornbill (long-tailed)’      | - |
| (c) | people with special statuses |                               |   |
|     | -                            | ‘maiden’                      | - |
|     | -                            | ‘prophet, doctor’             | - |
|     | -                            | ‘prophet’                     | - |
| (d) | man-made objects             |                               |   |
|     | -                            | ‘clay plate’                  | - |

### 3.25. **O-/AsU-**

This is a very small gender which consists of a few nouns designating lower animals and man-made objects:

|      |           |        |
|------|-----------|--------|
| - uu | ‘canoe’   | u-, u- |
| -    | ‘vulture’ | -      |

**3.26. O-**

Nouns in this single class gender are mainly abstract nouns, and a few natural phenomena and collective nouns:

|    |                 |
|----|-----------------|
| -  | ‘sleep’         |
| -  | ‘suffering’     |
| -  | ‘darkness’      |
| -  | ‘hunger’        |
| -  | ‘endurance’     |
| -β | ‘cloud(s), sky’ |
| -  | ‘punishment’    |
| -  | ‘crowd’         |

**3.27. O-/AbUrU-<sup>10</sup>**

This gender consists of nouns designating human relationships (kinship relationships):

|   |           |      |
|---|-----------|------|
| - | ‘husband’ | u u- |
| - | ‘mother’  | u u- |
| - | ‘friend’  | -    |
| - | ‘father’  | -    |

**3.28. OpU-/AbUrU-**

This gender also comprises nouns designating human relationship. Only one item is found to belong here: **opú-<sup>1</sup>gbó** ‘fellow’ **óbúru-**.

**3.29. U-/ArU-**

This is fairly mixed gender. Nouns in this gender designate plants, a few parts of the body, lower animals, natural phenomena, and some people with special social statuses, and some man-made objects:

|      |                  |      |
|------|------------------|------|
| u-   | ‘pear’ (tree)    | u-   |
| -    | ‘bitter leaf’    | -    |
| -    | ‘mushroom’       | -    |
| -    | ‘thigh’          | -    |
| u-   | ‘hoodless cobra’ | u-   |
| u-   | ‘large squirrel’ | u-   |
| u- u | ‘evening’        | u- u |
| u- u | ‘wet season’     | u- u |
| u-   | ‘cloth’          | u-   |

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|    |   |                |    |
|----|---|----------------|----|
| u- | u | ‘poor man’     | u- |
| u- |   | ‘yellow chalk’ | u- |

## 3.30. U-/AsU-

This is small gender consisting of nouns designating parts of the body, plants and lower animals:

|     |              |      |
|-----|--------------|------|
| u-β | ‘wing’       | u-   |
| u-  | ‘sugar-cane’ | u-   |
| -   | ‘turtle’     | -, - |

## 3.31. U-/AbUrU-

This is a small gender that is made up of nouns designating human relationships (kinship relationships):

|    |           |      |
|----|-----------|------|
| u- | ‘brother’ | u u- |
| -  | ‘sister’  | -    |

## 3.32. U(U)-

Man-made objects and abstract nouns make up this small single class gender:

- (a) man-made objects  
u- ‘shelter, shade’
- (b) abstract nouns  
uu- ‘cold’  
u- ‘darkness’

## 3.33. U-/I-

Lower animals make up this paired gender. Only one item is found here: **u-** **kagá’ra** ‘lizard’ **ɪ-**, **aru-**

## 4. Irregular forms

These constitute a small set of nouns whose plural forms are radically different from their singular counterparts:

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| ‘thing’      | , |
| ‘child, son’ |   |

Table 3. *A Summary of Genders and Noun Class Prefixes of Odual*

| Genders | Noun Class Prefixes | Singular Prefixes | Plural Prefixes  | Single Class prefixes |
|---------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1.      | A(A)-/ArA-          | A(A)-             | ArA-             | A(A)-                 |
| 2.      | A-/ArI-             | A U-              | ArI-             | A U-                  |
| 3.      | A-/AsI-             | A I-              | AsI-             | AIU-                  |
| 4.      | A-/AsU-             | AlV-              | AsU-             | E(E)-                 |
| 5.      | A-/ArU-             | AlU-              | AsUmU-           | I(I)-                 |
| 6.      | A I-/AsUmU-         | All-              | ArU-             | O-                    |
| 7.      | AlV-/AsI-           | E(E)-             | AbUrU-           | U(U)-                 |
| 8.      | AlU-/AsU-           | I-                | I-               | <b>Total = 7</b>      |
| 9.      | All-/I-             | O(O)-             | <b>Total = 8</b> |                       |
| 10.     | E(E)-/I-            | O U-              |                  |                       |
| 11.     | E(E)-/ArI-          | U-                |                  |                       |
| 12.     | E(E)-/ArA-          | <b>Total = 11</b> |                  |                       |
| 13.     | E(E)-/ArU-          |                   |                  |                       |
| 14.     | E-/AsU(mU)-         |                   |                  |                       |
| 15.     | I-/ArI-             |                   |                  |                       |
| 16.     | O(O)-/I-            |                   |                  |                       |
| 17.     | O(O)-/ArU-          |                   |                  |                       |
| 18.     | O-/ArA-             |                   |                  |                       |
| 19.     | O-/ArI-             |                   |                  |                       |
| 20.     | O-/AsU-             |                   |                  |                       |
| 21.     | O-/AbUrU-           |                   |                  |                       |
| 22.     | O U-<br>/AbUrU-     |                   |                  |                       |
| 23.     | U-/ArU-             |                   |                  |                       |
| 24.     | U-/AsU-             |                   |                  |                       |
| 25.     | U-/AbUrU-           |                   |                  |                       |
| 26.     | U-/I-               |                   |                  |                       |
| 27.     | A(A)-               |                   |                  |                       |
| 28.     | A U-                |                   |                  |                       |
| 29.     | AlU-                |                   |                  |                       |
| 30.     | E(E)-               |                   |                  |                       |
| 31.     | I(I)-               |                   |                  |                       |
| 32.     | O-                  |                   |                  |                       |
| 33.     | U(U)-               |                   |                  |                       |
|         | <b>Total = 33</b>   |                   |                  |                       |

The tonal behaviour of singular and plural prefixes is to a large extent predictable. The plural prefix has the same tone as the singular prefix. In other words, if the singular prefix has a low tone, then the plural prefix will also have a low tone; if the singular prefix has a high tone, then the plural prefix will also have a high tone. There are, however, a few exceptions such as **á-su** ‘horse’ (sg), **arú-su** ‘horses’ (pl) and **ə-ləər** ‘body’ (sg), **əsí-láər** ‘bodies’ where the tone of the prefix and/or stem in the plural is different from that of the singular.



- 
5. Each capital letter represents two phonologically determined alternants, as follows: A = /a, E = / , I = / , O = / , U = u/ .
  6. The data in the paper are transcribed using symbols that have IPA values.
  7. My informant says that this noun can take both prefixes.
  8. This noun is an irregular noun in terms of vowel harmony.
  9. The tone of stem in the plural is different from that of the stem in the singular.
  10. This plural prefix is associated with nouns designating human relationships, especially kinship relationships.

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## 46. The Determiner in the Igbo Nominal Phrase

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The idea that a nominal phrase is headed by a functional category ‘Det’ just as the clause is headed by ‘Infl’ was developed in Abney (1987). Since then, the traditional category NP has come to be known as DP (Determiner Phrase) in the recent literature. This paper examines the syntactic behaviour of the elements that are found within the Igbo nominal phrase. The two theoretical approaches: the standard NP analysis and the DP Hypothesis are compared. Using the NP Analysis, the Demonstrative and the Quantifier are identified as determiners in Igbo. However, the DP Hypothesis presents a different picture. The head D position could be occupied by only pronouns and pro-forms such as *ńkè* and *ndi*. The demonstrative and quantifier occupy the Spec DP position just like the Genitive NP and other nominal modifiers

### 1. Introduction

Determiner is a traditional notion in grammar used to refer to nominal modifiers such as articles, demonstratives, quantifiers, etc, that determine the referential or quantificational properties of the nouns associated with them. The items that should belong to this class of category seem to differ from one Language to another. Mbah (2006:111-112) notes that “Igbo Language does not have determiners as is used in Indo European Languages in association with common nouns”. He rather prefers to use the term ‘determiner’ to refer to all lexical items in Igbo which qualifies, modifies or quantifies a head so as to discriminate it from other hitherto identical lexical items” This notion of determiner then includes all nominal modifiers such as adjectives, demonstratives, quantifiers, possessives and even relative clauses.

We agree with Mbah (2006) that Igbo determiners are not exactly the same with that found in the Indo-European languages, but differ from him in the non-technical use of the term ‘determiner’ for all nominal modifiers in Igbo. We shall in this paper, examine the syntactic behaviours of the Igbo nominal modifiers: adjectives, demonstratives, quantifiers, numerals and relative clauses, with the aim of determining which of them qualify to be called determiners in the technical sense of the word.

We shall examine the structure of the Igbo nominal phrase from the point of view of the two contending theoretical models: the NP-Analysis and the DP-Hypothesis. Let us briefly discuss the theoretical models presently.

### 2. Theoretical models

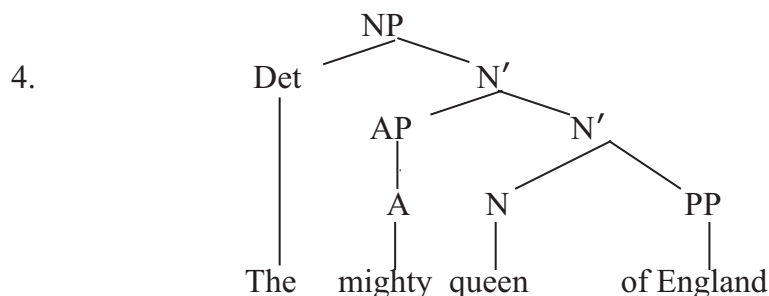
#### 2.1 The NP Analysis

The standard assumption of the NP Analysis within the X-bar framework is that a Nominal Phrase is headed by a noun and modified by optional elements such as determiners, adjectives, prepositional phrases, etc. The X-bar Phrase rules

generating a Nominal Phrase (in English and some other languages with similar structure) are as follows:

- 3 (a) NP  $\longrightarrow$  Det N'  
       N'  $\longrightarrow$  Adjunct N'  
       N'  $\longrightarrow$  N Complement

The rules in 3 could be illustrated with the following English NP 'The mighty queen of England':

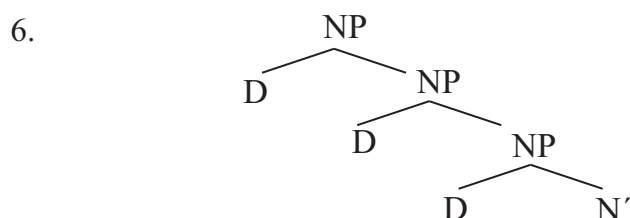


4 shows that the determiner 'the' occupies the Spec NP position, the AP 'mighty' occupies the adjunct position, while the PP 'of England' occupies the complement position.

The standard assumption of the X-bar theory is that there is only one specifier position for the elements collectively referred to as determiners such as articles, demonstratives, numerals genitives NPs, etc. These elements are mutually exclusive in a language such as English. However, evidence abound that double or multiple determiner NP constructions do occur in many languages [cf Hausa; Amfani (1995), Italian; Giorgi and Longobardi (1991)].

5. La mia partenza  
    the my departure  
    'my departure' (cf. Giorgi and Longobardi (1991:50))

Structures such as 5 are problematic for an X-bar theory that reserves only one specifier position in the phrase structure. Radford (1988: 170) proposes a recursive analysis for the multiple determiners as follows:



6 could accommodate a sequence of three determiners. The problem with the analysis in 6 is that there is no limit to the number of determiners a head noun could take. In other words, determiners are like adjectives. But this is not the case. Even in languages with multiple determiners, the number is not infinite. A careful study of some of the so called determiners would show that they do not actually

function as determiners in such languages. Igbo presents a case of this nature, to which we shall return to in section 3.

## 2.2 The DP-hypothesis

The basic assumption of the DP hypothesis is the claim that (D)eterminer is the head of the nominal phrase rather than its specifier. It assumes that the relationship between the determiner and noun is essentially a matter of determiner subcategorizing for an obligatory NP complement. Thus, by DP hypothesis a nominal phrase is actually a Determiner Phrase (DP). The DP structure is shown below:

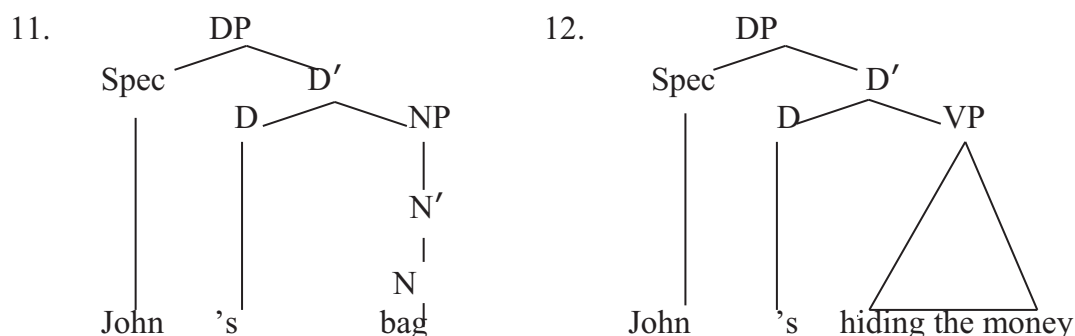


Abney (1987) makes his proposal based on the inability of the standard NP analysis to account for case-assignment to Genitive NP and the structure of gerundive noun phrases that seem to be headless. 8 below is Genitive phrase while 9 is a gerundive phrase.

8. John's bag  
9. John's hiding the money.

The NP-analysis could not explain how John receives its Genitive case, since N 'bag' is not a case-assigner. The gerundive NP in 8 lacks an appropriate head noun, since the Genitive NP 'John's' occupies the Spec NP position, while the gerundive form 'hiding' heads the VP.

With an analysis that assumes D as the head of the nominal phrase, the source of the Genitive case in 8 and the seeming headlessness of 9 are solved. The DP structure of 8 and 9 are as follows:



With this kind of analysis, D is seen as a functional category similar to I. It carries the agreement features of the nominal phrase.

We shall consider the possibility of applying the DP-Hypothesis to Igbo, but before then, let us examine the basic constituents of an Igbo Nominal Phrase.

## 3. The Constituents of the Igbo Nominal Phrase

An NP in Igbo, just like in many other languages consists of the lexical head noun with optional post modifiers. Igbo Noun Phrase may consist of noun plus all or some of these modifiers: (Adj)ective, (Poss)essive, (Num)eral, (Q)uantifier



(Dem)onstrative and Relative Clause (RC). For the fact that Igbo mostly operates the head first-parameter<sup>1</sup>, the modifiers occur in the same direction. This makes it difficult to distinguish the modifier types: Specifier, Complement and Adjunct.

An Igbo NP could contain all the elements listed below in 13.

13. akwà ọcha atọ m̄ niilē ahụ furu èfù  
       N     Adj Num Poss Q     Dem     RC  
       ‘all those three clothes of mine that got lost’

Oluikpe (1978:23) probably influenced by the English determiners posits the Igbo determiner rule as follows:

14. Det —→ (Num) (Quant) (Part)(Gen)(Demon)

According to the rule, Igbo determiners consist of a string of such optional elements as Numeral (Num), Quantifier (Quant), Particularizer (Part), Genitive (Gen) and Demonstratives (Demon). This rule is supported by an NP such as 15.

15. akwụkwọ atọ niilē ñkè m ahụ  
       N     Num Quant Part Gen Demon  
       Book three all my those  
       ‘all those three books of mine’

Oluikpe’s (1978) view is that the elements in 15 (except the head N) are determiners. In the light of this assertion, let us reexamine these constituents to determine their actual functions.

13 shows that a head noun is immediately followed by an adjective (or an adjectival Noun). All the other elements cannot intervene between the head and the adjectival as 15(b) and (c) show:

15. (a) ụlọ ọcha atọ ahụ     \*(c) ụlọ ahụ àtọ ọcha  
       house white three those     house those three white  
       ‘those three white houses’  
       \*(b) ụlọ àtọ ọcha ahụ  
           house three white those

Igbo has very few adjectives (cf Emenanjo (1978), Obiamalu (1998), Uwalaka (1997)). However, most adjectival notions are expressed by qualificative nouns and relative clauses. The few Igbo adjectives function as adjuncts. While some qualificative nouns are adjuncts, some are complements. Consider 17 and 18.

- 17 (a) ụlọ ọma     (c) ụlọ nnukwū  
       house good     house bigness  
       ‘good house’     ‘big house’  
       (b) ụlọ ọcha     (d) ụlọ ogologo  
       house white     house tallness  
       ‘white house’     ‘tall house’

18 (a) ụlò ọgwù  
house medicine  
'hospital'

(b) ụlò àlà  
house ground  
'bungalow'

The noun 'ụlò' is modified by adjectives in 17 (a) and (b) and by qualificative nouns in 17 (c), 17 (d), 18 (a) and 18 (b). While the modifier functions as adjunct in 17 (a)–(d), it functions as complement in 18 (a) and (b). The adjunct rule is recursive and so a head could take as many adjuncts as possible. Consider 19 (a)–(c).

19. (a) ụlò ọma ọcha oberē  
house good white smallness  
'good small white house'

(c) ụlò oberē ọcha ọma  
house smallness white good

(b) ụlò ọcha ọma oberē  
house white good smallness

19 (a) – (c) show that the adjunctive modifiers can follow any order. 18 (a) and (b) above can take other modifiers, but the order is fixed as shown in 20.

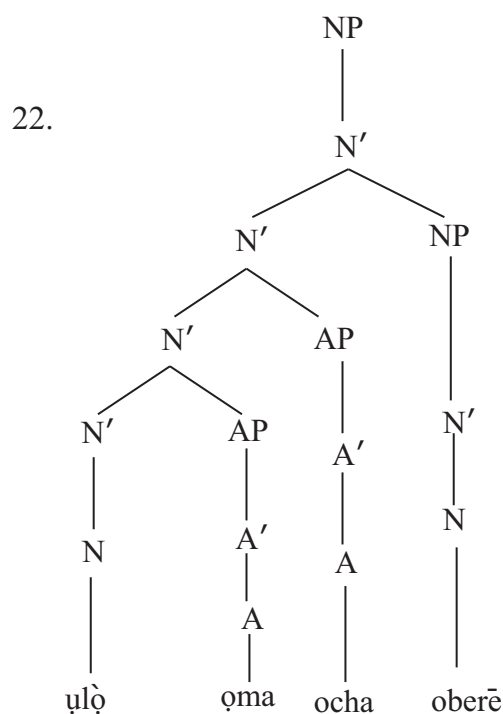
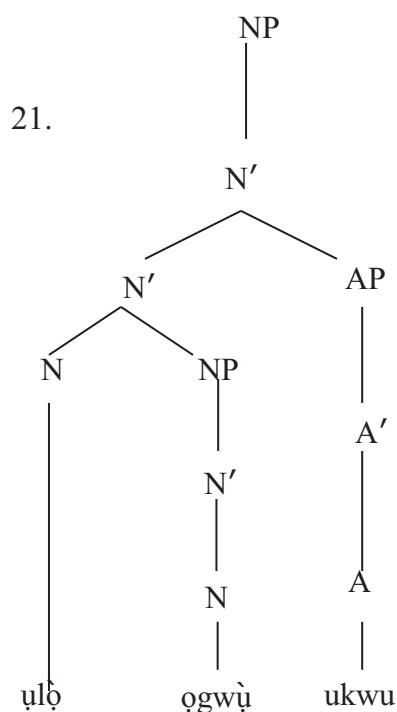
20. (a) ụlò ọgwù ukwu  
house medicine big  
'big hospital'

(c) ụlò àlà oberē  
house ground smallness  
'small bungalow'

\*(b) ụlò ukwu ọgwù  
house big medicine

\*(d) ụlò oberē àlà  
house smallness ground

Since a complement must be closer to the head than adjunct, 20 (b) and (d) are ruled out because the adjuncts intervene between the complements and the heads. 20 (a) will have the structure in 21, while 19 (a) will have the structure in 22





- 27 (a) akwà àtọ̀ m̀ ahụ̀ niilē      \*(c) akwà ahụ̀ àtọ̀ m̀ niilē  
       cloth Num Gen Dem Q                cloth Dem Num Gen Q  
       ‘all those three clothes of mine’
- (b) akwà àtọ̀ m̀ niilē ahụ̀      \*(d) akwà niilē àtọ̀ m̀ ahụ̀  
       cloth Num Gen Q Dem            cloth Q Num Gen Dem  
       ‘all those three clothes of mine’

27 (a) and (b) mean exactly the same thing, even though the positions of Dem and Q are interchanged. 27 (c) and (d) are ill-formed because one of the determiners is placed before the adjuncts: Num and Gen.

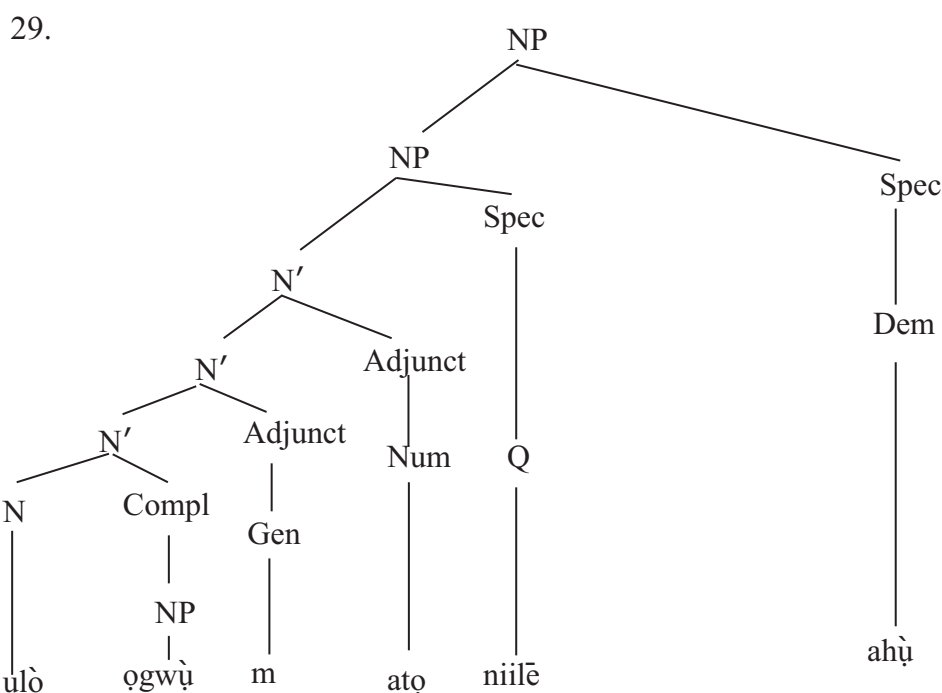
Secondly, while it is possible to derive relative clauses from Gen and Num (since RCs are also adjuncts), it is not so with Dem and Q. consider 28

- 28 (a) ụlọ̀ m      → ụlọ̀ bụ̀ ǹkè m  
       house Gen            ‘house that is mine’  
       ‘my house’
- (b) ụlọ̀ àtọ̀      → ụlọ̀ dị́ atọ̀  
       house Num            ‘house that are three in number’  
       three houses 3jmv
- (c) ụlọ̀ ahụ̀      → \*ụlọ̀ dị́/bụ́ ahụ̀  
       house Dem  
       that house
- (d) ụlọ̀ niilē      → \*ụlọ̀ dị́ /bụ́ niilē  
       house Q  
       all houses

28 (a)–(b) show that Gen and Num are adjectival in function. Dem and Q serve only the grammatical function of determining the characterization of the NP and thereby sealing off the maximal projection. This is why they occur only at the periphery.

Given that Dem and Q are determiners in Igbo and the fact that they do co-occur, we can then conclude that Igbo has double-determiner NP constructions. Different proposals have been made to account for double- (multiple-) determiner NP constructions. Jackendoff (1977) proposes higher bar levels (triple bar, quadruple-bar) making provision for multiple specifier positions. Radford (1988) proposes a recursive analysis as shown in 7. The implication of this analysis is that X-double bar level could behave like the X-bar level in being recursive. Amfani (1995) proposes a ‘broken determiner Analysis’ for Hausa on the argument that the two determiners (pre-and post-determiner) form one semantic unit and so complement each other. The two determiners in Igbo have different meanings. Each can occur without the other. If we should adopt Jackendoff’s analysis, it means that one of them belongs to a higher level and it is then not possible to

interchange their positions. 27 (a) and (b) show that this is not the case. The recursive analysis seems to be the most plausible for Igbo double-determiner NP. This is shown in the phrase marker below:



29 represents the articulated NP structure of Igbo in line with the standard NP Analysis discussed in section 2.2

#### 4. Igbo Nominal Phrase and the DP Hypothesis

The idea that a nominal phrase is headed by a functional category 'D' just as the clause is headed by I seems to have gained acceptance among so many syntacticians. Various arguments have been given on why D should head the nominal phrase. We have discussed the arguments in section 2.2. Though, the DP hypothesis has gained wider acceptance, it has some weaknesses which some syntacticians have pointed out.

Ernst (1991) argues that the complement of DP is not a maximal projection (i.e. not an NP). It lacks a specifier position and behaves just like N-bar. Secondly, the double- (multiple-) determiner NP construction presents a problem for DP hypothesis. It will amount to double headedness, if D is the head of the nominal phrase.

If one should follow the arguments presented for the DP-hypothesis, Igbo determiners do not encode the agreement features of the noun as Abney (1987) suggests. Consider 30 below.

30 (a) akwụkwọ ahù  
book that  
'that book'

(b) akwụkwọ ndị ahù  
book plural that  
'those books'

Neither the demonstrative determiner ‘ahù’ nor the noun ‘akwụkwọ’ changes in form to reflect plural number. Plurality is only expressed with an inherent plural noun ‘ndi’ (a possible candidate for D)

However, the fact that pronoun seems to be a universal category might be a justification for a general acceptance of the DP Hypothesis. Pronouns are pro-forms for nouns. They overtly show the phi-features (number, gender, person) and Case features normally associated with the Agr element. If these features are carried by D, then pronoun is a D. If pronoun is a D, then every language that has personal pronouns has the category D. If pronouns can stand in place of Noun as a nominal phrase, then every nominal phrase is headed by D.

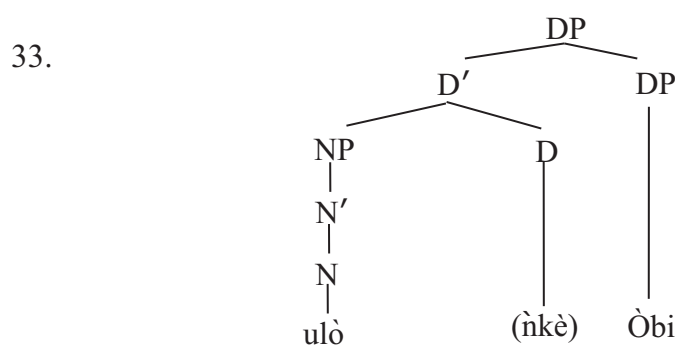
The DP-hypothesis may provide us with a better way of accounting for the structure of associative and possessive constructions in Igbo. Consider 31 (a) and (b).

- 31 (a) ụlọ ewū  
house goat  
‘goat shed’
- (b) ụlọ Òbì/ya  
house Obi/his  
‘Obi’s/his house’

In the noun-noun constructions above, the first noun is modified by the second. The first could be assigned a nominative or accusative case in a clausal construction. But there seems not to be a case–assigner for the modifying genitive NP. The explanation hitherto given is that the genitive NP has an inherent case. Igbo has no overt marker of association or possession except the predictable tonal changes and the optional use of ‘nke’ which we have described in section 3.0 as a pro-form.

- 32 (a) ụlọ (n̄kè) ewū  
house Part goat  
‘goat shed’
- (b) ụlọ (n̄kè) Òbì  
house Part Obi  
‘Obi’s house’ or ‘House of Obi’

One, could then argue that pro-form ‘n̄kè’ heads the Associative/Possessive NP construction. It licenses and assigns case to the Genitive DP following it. The structure of the phrase could be shown as in 33.



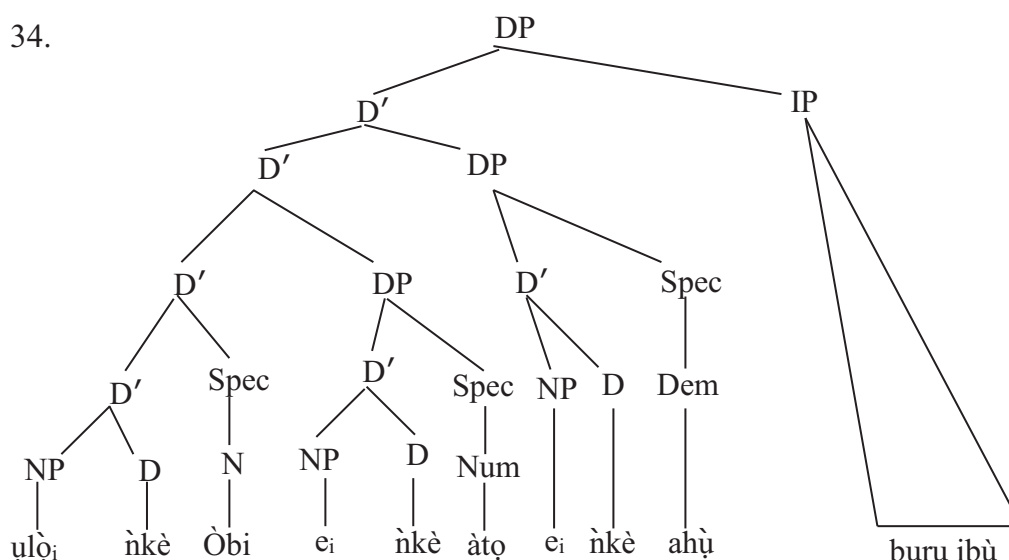
In the absence of ‘n̄kè’ the association grammatical tone<sup>3</sup> becomes the only feature of the head D.



Following the MODIFIER MAXIMALITY CONSTRAINT of Stowell (1981: 70) which states that “every non-head term in the expansion of a rule must itself be a maximal projection of some category”, it could be possible to embed one DP into another at different levels. A more complex structure is presented by 33.

33. ụlọ (n̄kè) Òbì (n̄kè) àtọ (n̄kè) ahụ buru ibù  
 house Part Obi Part Num Part Dem RC  
 ‘that third house of Obi that is big’

In 33, the noun ‘ụlọ’ is a common complement for the various Ds. The Genetive NP ‘Òbì’, the numeral ‘àtọ’ and the demonstrative ‘ahụ’, occupy the spec DP positions of three different DPs. 33 could be represented on a phrase marker as follows:



The complements of the embedded DPs are empty since they are the same with the first complement ‘ụlọ’. The implication of this new analysis is that the Demonstrative ‘ahụ’ which hitherto is analysed as determiner does not occur as the head D but rather at the Spec DP position and so could bear the agreement features of D. It then implies that all nominal modifiers in Igbo (including Dem and Q) occupy the Spec DP position. ‘Nke’ and the associative grammatical tone are the only elements occupying the head D position in Igbo. ‘Ndi’ in 30(b) could as well occupy the head D position since it encodes the number agreement feature associated with the noun. It is the only element that indicates that the noun in question is plural.

## 5. Conclusion

An attempt has been made in this present study to analyze the constituents of the Igbo nominal phrase in order to ascertain the elements that qualify to be regarded as determiner. The two approaches: NP-Analysis and DP-hypothesis are carefully examined. Going by the NP-Analysis, only the Demonstrative and the Quantifier could be called determiner in Igbo. However, the DP-hypothesis presents a

different picture, no NP modifier could be said to head the DP except 'nke' which serves as a link between the complement NP and the modifier in the Spec DP position.

## Notes

1. There are marked cases of NP premodification in Igbo. However, such premodifiers equally have postmodifier alternates. e.g.:

- |                                              |                                          |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1 (a) ajō mmadū<br>bad person                | 2 (a) nnukwu ụlō<br>big house            |
| (b) mmadū ojōō<br>person bad<br>'bad person' | (b) ụlō ukwu<br>house big<br>'big house' |

2. The recursive analysis in 29 presents a problem since it places the Relative Clause (which is the rightmost constituent of the NP) as one of the determiners. A more articulated NP structure is needed to account for the RC.

3. Uwalaka (2003) proposes a Grammatical Tone Phrase (GTP) for Igbo and other tone languages. Grammatically motivated tonal changes are the overt manifestations of different grammatical categories.

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## 47. The Indivisibility of {àì-} in Standard Yorùbá

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Yorùbá scholars do not agree on the form of the item “àì” in Standard Yorùbá. The disagreement is on whether {àì-} is a single morpheme (Délàṅṅò 1965; Rowlands 1969; Bámgbòsé 1967, 1990; Afòláyán 1969; Owólabí 1995); or two separate morphemes, {à-} and {ì-} (Courtenay 1969; Ajolore 1971; Abraham 1958; Oyelaran 1970; Awóyalé 1975). In a recent paper, Awóbùlúyì (2003) argues, albeit unconvincingly, in support of the two-separate-morpheme school. However, in his own analysis, while {à-} still retains its status as a prefix, {ì} is now a free morpheme, which he calls a negative pre-verbal modifier.

Evidence from the following words among others, *àìgbón* ‘lack of wisdom’, *àìsàn* ‘sickness’, *àìkú* ‘immortal’, show that a further division of {àì-} into smaller units will make the words to be unacceptable in SY *\*àgbón*, *\*ìgbón*, *\*àsàn*, *\*ìsàn* *\*àkú* *\*ìkú*.

According to him, this negative pre-verbal free morpheme cannot occur without the bound prefix {à-}. This is contrary to well-established linguistic principle that a bound morpheme is the one that must be dependent on a free morpheme in a word. Since {ì} can not occur without {à-} contrary to the second principle of morpheme identification used by Professor Awóbùlúyì himself, then it can not be regarded as a free morpheme.

### 1. Introduction

In Yorùbá Linguistics two major opinions exist as to the status of the item “àì” in Standard Yorùbá. While scholars such as Delano (1965); Rowlands (1969); Bámgbòsé (1967, 1990), Afolayan (1969); Owólabí (1995), say {àì-} is a morpheme, others such as Abraham (1958), Courtenay (1969), Ajolore (1971), Oyelaran (1970), Awóyalé (1975), and more recently Awóbùlúyì (2003), argue that “àì” is not a morpheme but two.<sup>1</sup> Awóbùlúyì (2003) identifies the two as {à-} and {ì}, a free morpheme which he refers to as a negative pre-verbal modifier (Awóbùlúyì 2003:4-8).

His analysis, if extended to more data will derive unacceptable words such as *\*àgbón*, *\*ìgbón*, *\*àsàn*, *\*ìsàn*, *\*àkú* and *\*ìkú* if “àì” in words such as *àìgbón* ‘lack of wisdom’, *àìsàn* ‘sickness’ and *àìkú* ‘immortal’ is further divided into two {à-} and {ì}.

In the said paper (Awóbùlúyì 2003), six arguments are put forward<sup>2</sup> in favour of two-separate-morpheme analysis. We shall take each of the arguments for discussion.

## 2. Awóbùlúyí's arguments and their weaknesses

The first argument in Awóbùlúyí (2003) to support the view that “àì” contains two morphemes is that {à-} in *àlọ* ‘going’ and *àilọ* ‘not going’ has the same meaning and form. The meaning is ‘event’-the fact of a thing’s occurring. Therefore {à-} in the two words is the same morpheme (Awóbùlúyí 2003:3-4). If this is the case, then ‘àì’ will be divisible into {à-} and {ì}.

1.
  - a. *àlọ* ‘going’
  - b. *àilọ* ‘not going’ →  
*àlọ* ‘going’ *ilọ* ‘the act of going’

However, this argument is defective in that it does not put into consideration other words in the language with {àì-} that cannot be so analyzed.

For instance, {àì-} in the following words cannot be divided into two, if it is, the result will be utterances that are not words in standard Yorùbá:

2.
  - a. *àsàn* ‘sickness’ → \**àsàn*, \**isàn*
  - b. *àìgbón* ‘lack of wisdom’ → \**àìgbón*, \**ìgbón*
  - c. *àìkú* ‘immortal’ → \**àkú*, \**ikú*

In order instances (in (3) below) the unacceptable words are those where {à-} of {àì-} alone occurs with the base or root.

3.
  - a. *àiré* ‘not friendly’ → \**àré*, *iré* ‘friendly’
  - b. *àìdúró* ‘not waiting’ → \**àdúró*, *ìdúró* ‘waiting’
  - c. *àìpàdé* ‘not meeting’ → \**àpàdé*, *ìpàdé* ‘meeting’

If {à-} in *àlọ* ‘going’ and in *àilọ* ‘not going’ is one and the same morpheme, the unacceptability of \**àsàn*, \**àìgbón*, \**àkú*, \**àré*, \**àdúró*, \**àpàdé* needs to be explained.

The second argument is that {ì} is a free morpheme that functions as a preverbal modifier (Awóbùlúyí 2003:4-8). This is where Professor Awóbùlúyí differs from other scholars of the two-separate- morpheme school<sup>3</sup> because others analyze {ì-} as a bound morpheme. However, Professor Awóbùlúyí punctures this argument himself as he observes that {ì} cannot occur alone without {à-} (Awóbùlúyí 2003:9).

If a free morpheme must depend on a bound morpheme to occur in a word, then we either redefine the concept of ‘free morpheme’ in morphological analysis or deny such a morpheme its ‘freedom’ and bind it with another as a bound morpheme<sup>4</sup>. {ì} as a negative pre-verbal morpheme is expected to independently negate either a word or a sentence or a phrase as the case may be. However, the words in (4) are not negative in meaning.

- 
4. a. ìlọ ‘the act of going’  
 b. ìmu ‘the act of drinking’  
 c. ìjẹ ‘the act of eating’  
 d. ìpàdé ‘meeting’  
 e. ìjókòó ‘the act of sitting’

The words in (4) are not negative because {ì-} in these words is a prefix and is different from {ì} proposed in Awóbùlúyì (2003)<sup>5</sup>.

However, Professor Awóbùlúyì says {ì} in the sentence in (5) (his 16) is the same as the negative pre-verbal morpheme.

- 5 Òjó tí ì lọ?  
 Ojo perf ?? go  
 ‘Has Ojo gone?’
6. Òjó kò ì lọ.  
 Ojo neg que go  
 ‘Ojo has not gone’.

The said morpheme {ì} is what we question in the gloss in (5). However, we are of the view that {ì} in (5) is a question marker as it is in (6). There is no negative morpheme in (5). Other native speakers also confirm our view. The negative morpheme in (6) is {kò}.

The third argument in Awóbùlúyì (2003) is given to support the dependency of the free morpheme {ì} on the bound morpheme {à-}. According to this argument (Awóbùlúyì 2003:9), the morpheme {bá} is always dependent on {tí/bí}, it cannot occur alone in a sentence. Consider (7) which is (15a) in Awóbùlúyì (2003).

7. Bí/Tí òjò bá rò, mi ò ní lọ.  
 cond. rain cond. fall I neg fut go  
 ‘If it rains, I will not go’.

However, {bí... bá} is a discontinuous subordinate morpheme used in conditional sentences hence the dependence of one on the other. In the light of this, ì of {àì-} cannot be treated as a separate morpheme rather it is part of the negative prefix {àì-}.

The fourth argument in support of the two – separate – morpheme analysis is that segments can be inserted between {à-} and {ì} in a words (Awóbùlúyì 2003: 4 – 5). Consider the examples in (8) ((5) in Awóbùlúyì (2003)).



- 
- |    |    |                       |                             |
|----|----|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 8. | a  | à - jẹ - ì - jẹ - tán | ‘eating without finishing’  |
|    | b  | à - bù - ì - bù-tán   | ‘cutting without finishing’ |
|    | c. | à - kúkú - ì bí       | ‘act of not giving birth’   |
- 

In (8) above, *jẹ* ‘eat’, *bù* ‘cut’ and *kúkú*, a pre verbal particle, are the segments that are said to be inserted between {à-} and {ì}. However, {à-} in the words in (8) is quite different from the one in {àì-}<sup>6</sup>. {ì-} in the said example is the remnant of {àì-} after à of {àì-} has been deleted<sup>7</sup>. A follow-up to the fourth argument is that \*àjẹ, \*àbù and \*àkúkú are not words in standard Yorùbá like *àlọ* ‘going’, *àbọ* ‘arriving’ therefore {à-} cannot be said to be merged with ‘jẹ’ ‘bù’ and ‘kúkú’ to derive unacceptable words.

One will hasten to say that {ì-} can merge with *jẹ* ‘eat’ and *bù* ‘cut’ to derive *ijẹ* ‘the act of eating’ and *ibù* ‘the act of cutting’ respectively. In the same vein, {ì-} can be merged with *pàdẹ* ‘meet’ and *yẹ* ‘worth’ to derive *ipàdẹ* ‘meeting’ and *iyẹ* ‘worthy’, but {à-} cannot be so used, hence \*àpàdẹ and àyẹ are not acceptable in standard Yorùbá. What this observation brings to the fore is that {à-} can merge with some words while

{ì-} can merge with some other words. The fact that {à-} cannot merge with some words in standard Yorùbá does not disqualify it to be used in the derivation of other words. This will be further explained below.

Finally, the sixth argument says that since \*àjẹ \*àbù are not words in standard Yorùbá, they cannot be used in the formation of new words. The argument goes further to say that the words in (9) are not derived by the prefixation of {à-} to the verbs.

- |    |    |                            |                               |
|----|----|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 9. | a. | *àjẹ àìjẹtán → àjẹàìjẹtán  | ‘eat not finish eating’       |
|    | b. | *àbù àìbùtán → àbù àìbùtán | ‘cut not finish cutting’      |
|    | c. | *àfọ àìfọtán → àfọàìfọtán  | ‘break not complete breaking’ |

Our reaction to this argument is that the words in (9) are not derived by the merging of {à-} to the verbs as explained above. Rather, {à-} is attached to the entire verb phrases as we have in (10) below.<sup>9</sup>

- |     |    |                              |
|-----|----|------------------------------|
| 10. | a. | à- + jẹ àìjẹtán → àjẹàìjẹtán |
|     | b. | à- + bù àìbùtán → àbùàìbùtán |
|     | c. | à- + fọ àìfọtán → àfọàìfọtán |

Other instances where {à-} is attached to the verb phrase to derive a noun are given in (11).

- |     |    |                    |
|-----|----|--------------------|
| 11. | a. | à- + bù mu → àbùmu |
|     |    | fetch drink        |

- 
- b.      à- + pa gbé      → àpa gbé  
                 kill ever
- c.      à- + jọ jẹ      → àjọjẹ  
                 together eat

It is not {à-} alone that can be employed as illustrated in (10) and (11) above, {a-} can be so used as the examples in (12) inform us.

12.    a.      a- + pa ẹja      → apeja  
                 kill fish
- b.      a- + pọ̀n omi      → aponmi  
                 fetch water
- c.      a- + rán aṣọ      → aránṣọ  
                 sew cloth

In the examples in (11) and (12), if {à-} or {a-} is merged with the verbs alone, the derivation will be unacceptable words in standard Yorùbá, such as \*àbù, \*àpa \*àjọ<sup>9</sup> \*apa \*apọ̀n \*àrán.

### 3. Further evidences for the indivisibility of {àì-}

Our discussion so far has shown that {à-}, {ì-} and {àì-} are three separate and distinct prefixes in standard Yorùbá. We can show their differences further as we examine the words in groups I-III below.

- |     |      |      |       |
|-----|------|------|-------|
| 13. | i    | ii   | iii   |
| lọ  | ìlọ  | àlọ  | àìlọ  |
| sùn | ìsùn | àsùn | àìsùn |
| ro  | ìro  | àro  | àìro  |
| wá  | ìwá  | àwá  | àìwá  |

The nouns in group I are derived by the merging of {ì-} ‘the acting of doing something’<sup>10</sup> to the verbs, in group II, by attaching {à-} ‘the fact that something is done’<sup>11</sup> to the root verbs while {àì-} the negative prefix ‘the fact that something is not done’<sup>12</sup> is attached to the verbs in group III. Intuitively, one can affirm that the nouns in group I have a different meaning from those in groups II and III, group II differ from those in group I and III, those in group III are different from the ones in groups I and II. The difference in meaning is due to the prefixes {ì-}, {à-} and {àì-}, therefore, these prefixes are distinct in standard Yorùbá.

Apart from the distinction made above between the three prefixes {à-}, {ì-} and {àì-}, the words below show that {àì-} is an indivisible bound morpheme and is inherently negative in standard Yorùbá. Further division of {àì-} into {à-} and {ì-} brings a meaning change in group I<sup>13</sup> and total unacceptability in group II.

| 14.    | i       | ii       | iii      |
|--------|---------|----------|----------|
| gbọ    | ìgbọ    | *àgbọ    | àìgbọ    |
| jẹ     | ìjẹ     | *àjẹ     | àìjẹ     |
| wo     | ìwò     | *àwò     | àìwó     |
| pé     | ìpé     | *àpé     | àìpé     |
| jókòó  | ìjókòó  | *àjókòó  | àìjókòó  |
| gbádùn | ìgbádùn | *àgbádùn | àìgbádùn |
| dára   | ìdára   | *àdára   | àìdára   |
| dúró   | ìdúró   | *àdúró   | àìdúró   |

In the next set of words, (15) below, a division of {àì-} into two derives unacceptable words in both groups I and II.

| 15.  | i      | ii                 | iii    |
|------|--------|--------------------|--------|
| gbón | *ìgbón | *àgbón             | àìgbón |
| sàn  | *ìsàn  | *àsàn              | àìsàn  |
| kù   | *ìkù   | *àkù               | àìkù   |
| mọ   | *ìmọ   | *àmọ <sup>14</sup> | àìmọ   |

#### 4. Conclusion

We have, in this paper, clearly shown that {àì-} is a morpheme which cannot be further divided into smaller units without doing harm to its semantic content and its grammatical function. We have also shown that {àì-} is different from {à-} and {ì-} in standard Yorùbá based on meaning and in structure, therefore, to postulate that {àì-} can be further divided into {à-} and {ì-}, or {i} as the case may be, in standard Yorùbá is an anomaly.

#### Notes

1. Opinions are also divided among the two-separate-morpheme school regarding which of {à-} or {ì-} (or {i} of Awóbùlúyì) is the negative prefix. Courtenay (1969) Ajọlore (1971) and Abraham (1958) as reported in Awóyalé (1975) pick {à-} as the negative prefix. Oyelaran (1970) as reported in Awoyale (1975) picks two morphemes {à-} and {ì-} as the negative prefixes, Awóyalé (1975) says {ì-} is the negative prefix (see Awóyalé 1975: 407, 411-412 for details). On his own part, Professor Awóbùlúyì argues that {i}, a free morpheme, unlike the bound morphemes of others, is the negative morpheme; he calls it a pre-verbal modifier. We shall focus on Professor Awóbùlúyì's submission in this work as Awóyalé's view has been discussed elsewhere (see Owólabí 1995a: 108 Note 3).
2. The six arguments are scattered in the paper and brought out as they are treated therein for the purpose of this discussion.

3. The other scholars of the two-separate-morpheme school are listed in Awóyalé (1975:411) including Professor Awóyalé himself (see Owólabí 1995:108 note 3).
4. In the case of ì that is under consideration, note that its feature does not actually portray it as a morpheme of its own, either bound or free. It is part of a negative bound morpheme {àì-} as our subsequent discussions will reveal.
5. The bound morpheme {ì-} in the words in (4) is not actually the same as the ì of {àì-} as we shall show later in this work.
6. See our comments on the first argument above.
7. See Owólabí (1989) for a vivid account of deletion in Yorùbá. See also Owólabí 1995a:108 Note3.
8. Class-changing derivational morphemes can be attached to the verb, the verb phrase or the adjective to derive a noun in Yorùbá. See Owolabi (1995a: 104-107) for details.
9. Àjọ will be an acceptable word in standard Yorùbá if it means ‘contribution’ in which case it will no longer be two morphemes of {à-} and {jọ} but one {àjọ}.
10. This translation is taken from Owólabí (1995a:108).
11. Awóyalé (1975:407,411-412) calls {à-} a factive prefix.
12. Following this description, {àì-} can be referred to as a ‘negative factive prefix’ in standard Yorùbá.
13. The change in meaning is more pronounced in that the negative meaning {àì-} gives to a word is changed to a positive one by {ì-}.
14. Àmọ will be an acceptable word in standard Yorùbá if it means a co-ordinating conjunction ‘but’ and not derived from the verb mọ ‘be clean’. As a conjunction, àmọ will be a morpheme {àmọ} and not two {à-} and {mọ}.

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## 48. Lexical Analysis of Polysemy in Owere Igbo

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This study discusses the phenomenon of polysemy, drawing examples from Owere Igbo. In carrying out this research, twenty-five (25) competent speakers of Owere Igbo who have lived in Owere Igbo-speaking areas for more than fifteen (15) years were selected through purposive sampling method. Fifteen (15) of them were linguistically trained adult native speakers of Owere Igbo, while ten (10) were linguistically untrained adult native speakers of the dialect. The researcher also employed native speaker's intuition as a linguist investigating her own language. The result of the study showed that polysemous lexemes exist in Owere Igbo and that for a polysemous lexeme, the various meanings belong to a common semantic field, i.e. the several senses belong to a common core. The analysis also revealed that for polysemous lexemes, there are primary and secondary senses. The primary meanings, it was discovered correspond to the denotative meaning, while the secondary meaning(s) which derive from the primary meaning correspond to the associative meaning. The study further revealed that there are metaphorical and transferred meanings, which are derived from the literal or original meaning. The researcher also discovered that factors such as meaning extension, semantic overload, etc., could give rise to polysemy in Owere Igbo.

### 1.1 Introduction

Accounts of semantic structure, according to Crystal (1997b), recognize two kinds of meaning relations. Some result from the way in which lexemes can substitute for each other (i.e. paradigmatic or lexical meaning relation), others from the way lexemes occur in sequences (i.e. syntagmatic or sentential meaning relation).

Several types of lexical meaning relations have been recognized in semantic study. These include synonymy, antonymy, polysemy, homonymy and hyponymy.

Polysemy is a kind of lexical meaning relation whereby one lexeme has several very closely related senses. A polysemous lexeme will naturally have a core meaning and a variety of synonyms, each corresponding to one of its meanings (Palmer 1996:107). The various meanings may or may not themselves be synonymous in all contexts. In other words, the various meanings of a polysemous lexeme are synonyms of the polysemous lexeme, but these different meanings may not substitute for each other in all contexts.

Polysemy, according to Ullmann (1962), is a necessary feature of language because it introduces flexibility and economy in language. Ullmann further explains that if it were not possible to attach several senses to one lexeme, this would mean a crushing burden on our memory as we would have to possess separate terms for every conceivable subject we might wish to talk about. The study makes an attempt to identify the primary and secondary senses of a lexeme



as well as the literal and the transferred meanings of a polysemous lexeme. The study also looks into the sources of polysemy in Owerre Igbo.

## 2.1 Literature Review

According to Bejoint (2000:190), all linguists admit the existence of word meanings, and the fact that some lexemes have only one (monosemy), while others have more than one (polysemy).

Barnwell's (1980) analysis of polysemy reveals that there are primary sense and secondary sense. The primary sense of a lexeme, she notes, is the most commonly used in the language. It is the sense which native speakers of a language will first think of when they hear the lexeme in isolation. It is, therefore, the sense which is least dependent on the context. She also points out that it is the primary sense which usually occurs as the first entry for a lexeme in a dictionary. The other senses are often regarded as secondary to be derived from the primary sense. Barnwell also adds that the intuition of mother-tongue speakers of the language will be a valuable guide in identifying and describing the senses.

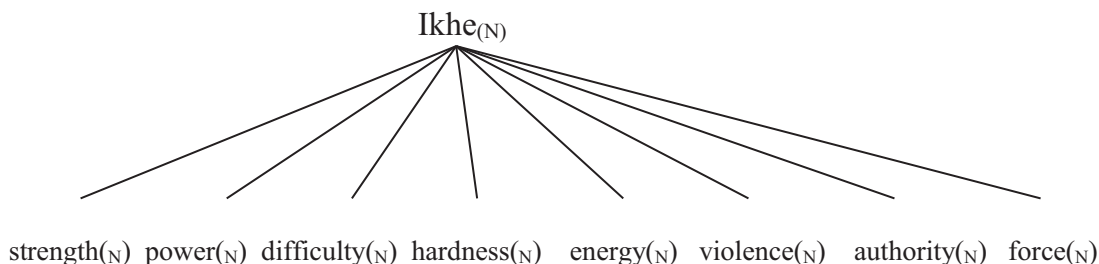
Palmer (1996) is also of the view that the several meanings of a polysemous lexeme must belong to a common semantic field. The word 'head', for instance, is polysemous because all its various meanings connote 'the centre' or 'the starting point of anything'. Palmer also points out that a word which is polysemous has one of these several senses or meanings as central, while the other senses or meanings are mere figurative or metaphorical extensions of the core sense. For instance, the central sense of the word 'foot' is 'part of the 'body''. All the other senses, such as "foot of the bridge", etc., are mere metaphorical extensions (see also Ejele 1996:121).

Ullmann (1962) also states that polysemy can arise in a multiplicity of ways. He identifies the following as sources of polysemy: shift in application, specialization of meaning, figurative language, and reinterpretation of homonyms and semantic borrowing.

### 3.1. Explaining Polysemy in Owerre Igbo

Polysemy as has been described in the introduction is a case where there is one lexeme with several very closely related senses. For example, the lexeme *ikhe<sub>N</sub>* in Owerre Igbo has many different, but closely related senses, as shown below:

Fig. 1: *Polysemous Relationship*



These various senses are indicated in the following environments:

1. Chinēkè wù *ikhē* m  
'The Lord is my *Strength*'
2. *Ikhe* nwaanyị aḥụ shì mĩrĩ  
'That woman's *power* is from the river'
3. I chọta ụyò gị shìrì m *Ikhe*  
'To locate your house was *difficult* for me'
4. O zùrù ya màkà i shi *ikhe* ya  
'He bought it because of its *hardness*'
5. Ụtara ji jè enye *ikhē*  
'Pounded yam gives *energy*'
6. Nde aghā ji *ikhe* chụhụ m  
'The soldiers drove me away by *violence*'
7. Njokū nàtara *ikhe* aka onye ishī nwo  
'Njoku got *authority* from their leader'
8. Mĩrĩ gbashiga *ikhe*  
'The water is flowing with *force*'

The different senses of *ikhe*, as we can see above, are related. Analyses of polysemous lexemes in Owere Igbo are as follows:

Fig. 2: *Polysemous Lexemes and their Different but Related Senses.*

| <i>Polysemous lexeme</i> | <i>Gloss (different but related meanings)</i>                                                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. àbùbà (N)             | (a) 'fatness (N), 'grease'(N)<br>(b) 'luxurious living'(N)                                       |
| 2. àbhũrù(N)             | (a) 'lineage'(N), 'stock'(N)<br>(b) 'race'(N), 'family'(N)<br>(c) 'breed'(N), 'seed'(N)          |
| 3. achà(N)               | (a) 'a very sharp cutting instrument'(N)<br>(b) 'a ruthless uncompromising and severe person'(N) |
| 4. àmàmiñe(N)            | (a) 'wisdom' (N)<br>(b) 'knowledge'(N)                                                           |
| 5. anya(N)               | (a) 'eye' (of human) (N)<br>(b) 'foresight' (N)                                                  |

|                |                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6. igwè (N)    | (a) 'metal' (N), 'iron' (N)<br>(b) 'bullet' (N)<br>(c) 'machine' (N), 'engine' (N) 'bicycle' (N)                                                                                           |
| 7. Igwē (N)    | (a) 'sky' (N), 'heavens' (N)<br>(b) 'name of the sky god' (N)<br>(c) 'a title of honour' (N)                                                                                               |
| 8. iñu (N)     | (a) 'front' (of surface) (N)<br>(b) 'face' (part of body) (N)<br>(c) 'general appearance' (N)                                                                                              |
| 9. ikhè (N)    | (a) 'bottom' (N)<br>(b) 'buttocks' (N)<br>(c) 'hindpart' (N)<br>(d) 'anus' (N)                                                                                                             |
| 10. àlà (N)    | (a) 'earth' (N)<br>(b) 'ground' (N)<br>(c) 'land' (N)<br>(d) 'soil' (N)                                                                                                                    |
| 11. ãro (N)    | (a) 'enmity' (N)<br>(b) 'discord' (N)<br>(c) 'jealousy' (N)<br>(d) 'feud' (N)                                                                                                              |
| 12. ishi (N)   | (a) 'head' (part of body) (N)<br>(b) 'leader (of a group) (N)<br>(c) 'first' (N)<br>(d) 'theme/subject matter' (N)<br>(e) 'source' (N), 'origin' (N)<br>(f) 'conclusion' (N), 'result' (N) |
| 13. mkpūrū (N) | (a) 'fruits' (N)<br>(b) 'children' (N)                                                                                                                                                     |

The data above show that the various meanings of a polysemous lexeme are related. For example, the different meanings of the lexeme *àmàmiñe* 'knowledge' and 'wisdom' are related.

This similarity in sense, it should be noted, is sometimes difficult to define in words for some lexemes. For instance, whereas it is easy to explain the relatedness in sense between the different readings or *okè* 'boundary' and 'discrimination' (i.e. something that separates), it is not easy to explain the relatedness of the different senses of the lexeme *Igwē* 'sky'/heavens', 'name of sky god' and 'a title of honour'. This is because the different meanings of *okè* 'boundary' and 'discrimination' stand out clearly, while those of *Igwē* 'sky'/'heavens', 'name of sky god' and 'a title of honour' do not. It is important to note that the lexeme *igwē* originally refers to the sky or heaven. It also refers to the name of the sky god, as well as a title of honour, meaning 'majestic' or 'great'. There is, however, a

connection between these three different senses of *Igwē* because *Igwē* as a title of honour is derived from the sky or heaven. This illustration shows that relatedness between the various senses of *igwē*. This relationship, as we can see, is not easy to define in words as is the case with *okè*. In other words, the various senses of *igwē* are related in a remote sense.

#### 4.1 Polysemy and Relatedness in Sense

One important feature of a polysemous lexeme is that its several meanings belong to a common core, i.e. they have something which they share. For instance, the different meanings of the lexeme *àžũ* ‘part of human body’/‘behind’ are related in that they share something in common, i.e they refer to the back of something. The examples below show polysemous lexemes and the common features shares by the different senses:

Fig.3: *Polysemous Lexemes and the Common Features Shared by the Different Senses*

| S/No | Lexeme     | Meaning <sub>1</sub> | Meaning <sub>2</sub> | Shared or common meaning                       |
|------|------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 14   | ajā(N)     | soil(N)              | wall(N)              | Both refer to the concept of sand              |
| 15   | ikhe(N)    | strength(N)          | force(N)             | Both refer to the concept of insurmountability |
| 16   | ivù(N)     | fatness(N)           | bigness(N)           | Both refer to the concept of magnitude in size |
| 17   | ùtọ(N)     | deliciousness(N)     | sweetness(N)         | Both refer to the concept of pleasant taste    |
| 18   | okè(N)     | discrimination(N)    | boundary(N)          | Both refer to the concept of demarcation       |
| 19   | ọkhụ       | fire(N)              | hotness(N)           | Both refer to the concept of heat              |
| 20   | ụgwụ(N)    | enmity(N)            | hatred(N)            | Both refer to the concept of strong dislike    |
| 21   | ùbịàm(N)   | poverty(N)           | scarcity(N)          | Both refer to the concept of want              |
| 22   | ìhwò(N)    | light(N)             | civilization(N)      | Both involve the concept of social development |
| 23   | ùba(N)     | abundance(N)         | richness(N)          | Both refer to the concept of surplusness       |
| 24   | olu(N)     | voice(N)             | dialect(N)           | Both involve the concept of sound              |
| 25   | àmàmihe(N) | wisdom(N)            | knowledge(N)         | Both refer to the concept of understanding     |
| 26   | alà(N)     | earth(N)             | country(N)           | Both refer to the concept of land              |
| 27   | wa(N)      | break(v)             | divide(N)            | Both involve the process of splitting          |
| 28   | mpi(N)     | horn(N)              | wine cup(N)          | Both refer to the concept of                   |

|    |                       |                            |                        |                                                                   |
|----|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    |                       |                            |                        | container                                                         |
| 29 | akwarà <sub>(N)</sub> | artery <sub>(N)</sub>      | vein <sub>(N)</sub>    | Both refer to the concept of carrying blood (a kind of transport) |
| 30 | ùcha <sub>(Adj)</sub> | whiteness <sub>(N)</sub>   | honesty <sub>(N)</sub> | Both refer to the concept of spotlessness                         |
| 31 | mmanu <sub>(N)</sub>  | cooking oil <sub>(N)</sub> | pomade <sub>(N)</sub>  | Both contain greasy substance                                     |
| 32 | mĩrĩ <sub>(N)</sub>   | rainfall <sub>(N)</sub>    | water <sub>(N)</sub>   | Both refer to the concept of liquid                               |
| 33 | onũ <sub>(N)</sub>    | hole <sub>(N)</sub>        | mouth <sub>(N)</sub>   | Both refer to the concept of aperture/opening                     |
| 34 | oma <sub>(Adj)</sub>  | good <sub>(Adj)</sub>      | well <sub>(Adj)</sub>  | Both refer to the concept of excellence                           |

From the data above, we can see that the different senses of a polysemous lexeme share something in common. For example, the different senses of *ùto* <sub>(N)</sub> give us the general concept of the quantities that give delight to the senses, especially, to the eye, ear, and mouth or to the mind, while the different senses of *ivù* <sub>(N)</sub> refer to the concept of magnitude in size. Because of this semantic relationship (i.e. similarity in sense), these different uses are treated as different senses of a single lexeme, not as different lexemes. We are justified, therefore, to say that lexemes above are polysemous by virtue of the criterion of relatedness of meaning.

### 5.1 Differentiating the Senses of a Polysemous Lexeme in Grammatical Context

Polysemous lexemes, as we remarked earlier, have different but related meanings. It is also important to note that in sorting out the different meanings, the grammatical context provides a useful starting point for analysis. In other words, it is the grammatical context that provides the clue to identify the senses in which a particular lexeme is used. This also means that the meaning of a lexeme may vary according to the context in which it is used, i.e. depending either on the linguistic context or on the situation in which the sentence is made.

Grammatical differentiation, thus, corresponds to a way of disambiguating the senses of a lexeme. In polysemy, there exist a set of senses of lexeme, and a particular sense is to be identified based on the senses of the lexeme. The syntactic differences existing between these senses are ways of distinguishing one sense of a lexeme from the other.

Below are some examples of polysemous lexemes and the context in which the related senses are used:

Fig.4: *Polysemous Lexemes used in Different Contexts*

| S/N | Polysemous lexeme | Gloss (different but related senses) | Matrix (or frame) | English equivalent |
|-----|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
|     |                   |                                      |                   |                    |

|    |          |                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 35 | ùtọ(N)   | a) happiness(N)<br>b) sweetness(N)<br>c) deliciousness(N)<br>d) beauty(N)<br>e) friendliness(N)<br><br>f) harmony(N) | Obi rị m ùtọ<br>Mmanụ añụ rị ùtọ Ofe e<br>rị ùtọ<br>Nkechi rị ùtọ<br>Chike wụ onye ùtọ<br>gị<br>Nnwo ji ùtọ biri | ‘I am <i>happy</i> ’<br>‘Honey is <i>sweet</i> ’<br>‘This soup is <i>delicious</i> ’<br>‘Nkechi is <i>beautiful</i> ’<br>‘Chike is <i>friendly</i> with you’<br>‘They live in <i>harmony</i> ’ |
| 36 | ivù (N)  | (a) fatness(N)<br>(b) bigness(N)                                                                                     | Nne m vùrù ivù<br>Àkpà m vùrù ivù                                                                                | ‘My mother is <i>fat</i> ’<br>‘My bag is <i>big</i> ’                                                                                                                                          |
| 37 | urù(N)   | (a) usefulness(N)<br>(b) profit(N)                                                                                   | Àda bàrà urù<br>Ahịa àkpà bàrà urù                                                                               | ‘Ada is <i>useful</i> ’<br>‘To sell bags is <i>profitable</i> ’                                                                                                                                |
| 38 | uzọ(N)   | (a) path(N)<br>(b) door(N)<br><br>(c) means(N)                                                                       | Uzọ mmīrī rị ọti Uzọ m<br>he ọnụ<br><br>Olee uzọ i shiri mere<br>ya?                                             | ‘The <i>path</i> to the stream is far’<br>‘My <i>door</i> is open’<br>‘By what <i>means</i> did you do it?’                                                                                    |
| 39 | olu(N)   | (a) neck(N)<br><br>(b) voice(N)                                                                                      | Olu ya tòrò ogologo<br><br>Olu ya màrà mma                                                                       | ‘Her <i>neck</i> is long’<br><br>‘Her <i>voice</i> is sweet’                                                                                                                                   |
| 40 | ndhù(N)  | (a) life(N)<br><br>(b) freshness(N)                                                                                  | Okoro rị ndhù<br>Ugụ añụ rị ndhù                                                                                 | ‘Okori is <i>alive</i> ’<br><br>‘That vegetable is <i>fresh</i> ’                                                                                                                              |
| 41 | owede(N) | (a) smallness(N)<br>(b) youth(N)                                                                                     | Wèta mmà owede<br>Chinyèrè wù nwatà<br>owede                                                                     | ‘Bring the <i>small</i> knife’<br>‘Chinyere is a <i>young</i> girl’                                                                                                                            |

It should also be mentioned that for a polysemous lexeme, the various meanings are synonyms of the polysemous lexeme, but these various meanings are not themselves synonyms of each other. For instance, *ikhe* and its various meanings, i.e. ‘strength’, ‘hardness’, ‘difficulty’, ‘tightness’, ‘toughness’, etc, are synonyms, but these different senses are not themselves absolutely synonymous because a man who has strength (i.e. strong man) may not necessarily be experiencing some difficulty or be a tough man. In other words, difficulty cannot substitute for ‘strength’ in all contexts.

It should also be remarked that no matter how many meanings a lexeme may have in a dictionary, there will be no confusion if only one of them can apply in a given context (or situation). The different senses of these polysemous lexemes, it should also be pointed out, belong to the same word class. For example, the different meanings of *urù* ‘usefulness’/‘profit’ are nouns.



### 5.1.1 Primary and Secondary Usage

Having noted that a lexeme may have several related meanings, it is important to also point out that for a polysemous lexeme, there are primary and secondary senses. When a lexeme is used in its basic sense, we refer to such a usage as primary usage. The primary sense is, therefore, that sense in which the lexeme is most commonly used in the language. It is also the sense, which speakers of a language will first think of when they hear the lexeme in isolation. The primary sense corresponds to denotative meaning when it is mentioned in isolation. This is clearly shown in some Owerre Igbo personal names or contexts:

- (42) Ikhechukwu  
'God's strength'
- (43) Chiwụikem  
'God's is my strength'
- (44) Azụwụikhe  
'Back is strength (i.e. that which proceeds gives strength)'
- (45) Ụbawụikhe  
'Multitude/large number is strength'.

The primary sense of the lexeme *ikhe* is, therefore, 'strength' as we have shown in the examples above. It is also to be noted that it is the primary sense which is usually entered first for a lexeme in a dictionary. The other sense(s) is/are often regarded as secondary sense(s). The secondary sense(s) is/are assumed to have derived from the primary sense and corresponds to associative meaning. Some of these secondary senses are metaphorical extensions of the primary sense. The intuition of mother tongue speakers of a language is a valuable guide in identifying and describing the senses. Below are some polysemous lexemes showing the primary and secondary meanings in Owerre Igbo:

Fig.5: Polysemous Lexemes Showing Primary and Secondary Meanings

| S/No | Polysemous Lexeme    | Gloss                                                                             | Primary Meaning               | Secondary Meaning                                   |
|------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 46   | ụba <sub>(N)</sub>   | (a) wealth <sub>(N)</sub><br>(b) abundance <sub>(N)</sub>                         | wealth <sub>(N)</sub><br>-    | -<br>abundance <sub>(N)</sub>                       |
| 47   | àkpà <sub>(N)</sub>  | (a) bag <sub>(N)</sub><br>(b) pocket <sub>(N)</sub>                               | bag <sub>(N)</sub><br>-       | -<br>pocket <sub>(N)</sub>                          |
| 48   | ọkhu <sub>(N)</sub>  | (a) fire <sub>(N)</sub><br>(b) hotness <sub>(N)</sub><br>(c) light <sub>(N)</sub> | fire <sub>(N)</sub><br>-<br>- | -<br>hotness <sub>(N)</sub><br>light <sub>(N)</sub> |
| 49   | añuñu <sub>(N)</sub> | (a) suffering <sub>(N)</sub><br>(b) punishment <sub>(N)</sub>                     | suffering <sub>(N)</sub><br>- | -<br>punishment <sub>(N)</sub>                      |

|     |                          |                                                                                                                                            |                                         |                                                                                                        |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     |                          | (c)poverty <sub>(N)</sub>                                                                                                                  | -                                       | poverty <sub>(N)</sub>                                                                                 |
| 50  | uzò <sub>(N)</sub>       | (a) road <sub>(N)</sub><br>(b) door <sub>(N)</sub><br>(c) means <sub>(N)</sub>                                                             | road <sub>(N)</sub><br>-<br>-           | -<br>door <sub>(N)</sub><br>means <sub>(N)</sub>                                                       |
| 51  | nwayòò <sub>(AdjN)</sub> | (a) gentleness <sub>(AdjN)</sub><br>(b) quiteness <sub>(Adj N)</sub><br>(c) slowness <sub>(Adj N)</sub>                                    | gentleness <sub>(N)</sub><br>-<br>-     | -<br>quietness <sub>(N)</sub><br>slowness <sub>(N)</sub>                                               |
| 52  | osò <sub>(N)</sub>       | (a) fastness <sub>(N)</sub><br>(b) race <sub>(N)</sub>                                                                                     | fastness <sub>(N)</sub><br>-            | -<br>race <sub>(N)</sub>                                                                               |
| 53  | òdhù <sub>(N)</sub>      | (a) tail <sub>(N)</sub><br>(b) last <sub>(N)</sub>                                                                                         | tail <sub>(N)</sub><br>-                | -<br>last <sub>(N)</sub>                                                                               |
| 54. | mmanụ <sub>(N)</sub>     | (a) cooking oil <sub>(N)</sub><br>(b) pomade <sub>(N)</sub><br>(c) grease <sub>(N)</sub>                                                   | cooking oil <sub>(N)</sub><br>-<br>-    | -<br>pomade <sub>(N)</sub><br>grease <sub>(N)</sub>                                                    |
| 55  | ĩhu <sub>(N)</sub>       | (a) face <sub>(N)</sub><br>(b) front <sub>(N)</sub>                                                                                        | face <sub>(N)</sub><br>-                | -<br>front <sub>(N)</sub>                                                                              |
| 56. | ùcha <sub>(N)</sub>      | (a) whiteness <sub>(N)</sub><br>(b) cleanness <sub>(N)</sub><br>(c) fair<br>complexion <sub>(N)</sub><br>(d) honesty/purity <sub>(N)</sub> | whiteness <sub>(N)</sub><br>-<br>-<br>- | -<br>cleanest <sub>(N)</sub><br>fairness<br>complexion <sub>(N)</sub><br>honesty/purity <sub>(N)</sub> |
| 57  | obi <sub>(N)</sub>       | (a) heart <sub>(N)</sub><br>(b) breast <sub>(N)</sub><br>(c) chest <sub>(N)</sub><br>(d) conscience <sub>(N)</sub>                         | heart <sub>(N)</sub><br>-<br>-<br>-     | -<br>breast <sub>(N)</sub><br>chest <sub>(N)</sub><br>conscience <sub>(N)</sub>                        |
| 58  | mkpọtụ <sub>(N)</sub>    | (a) noise <sub>(N)</sub><br>(b) loudness <sub>(N)</sub>                                                                                    | noise <sub>(N)</sub><br>-               | -<br>loudness <sub>(N)</sub>                                                                           |
| 59  | ikhè <sub>(N)</sub>      | (a) buttocks <sub>(N)</sub><br>(b) bottom <sub>(N)</sub><br>(c) anus <sub>(N)</sub>                                                        | buttocks <sub>(N)</sub><br>-<br>-       | -<br>bottom part <sub>(N)</sub><br>anus <sub>(N)</sub>                                                 |
| 60  | mĩri <sub>(N)</sub>      | (a) water <sub>(N)</sub><br>(b) rainfall <sub>(N)</sub><br>(c) stream/river <sub>(N)</sub>                                                 | water <sub>(N)</sub><br>-<br>-          | -<br>rainfall <sub>(N)</sub><br>stream/river <sub>(N)</sub>                                            |

It must be added, however, that although it is not difficult on the part of the speakers to sort out the primary senses of the polysemous lexemes above, some lexemes display some variation in the meaning they express that the criteria for pinning down the primary senses are often dependent on questions of frequency of usage and predictability rather than on clearly delineated distinctions. In such cases, it becomes difficult to pick out the primary sense(s) because some speakers will think of one of the senses to be primary, while others will not feel that way. For example, some Owere Igbo speakers feel that the primary meaning of *uzò* is ‘road’, while others feel that it is ‘door’.

### 5.1.2 Literal and Transferred Meaning

A polysemous lexeme usually has one of the senses as literal, while the other(s) may be either metaphorical or figurative extensions of the core sense. This means that a lexeme can be given one or more figurative senses, while maintaining its

core or central meaning. Hence, it is frequently pointed out by many semanticists that one of the senses of a polysemous lexeme is central or original, while the others are mere metaphorical or figurative extensions. For example, the lexeme *ishi* 'head' primarily means a part of the body. All the other senses such as 'leader of a group', 'first', 'theme'/'subject-matter', 'source or origin' and 'issue' or 'topic' are mere metaphorical extensions of the core meaning.

The metaphorical extensions can be said to be derived from the literal or original meaning which we earlier termed the primary meaning. The metaphorical sense(s) can also be referred to as the secondary meaning(s).

Metaphor, it should be noted, is a figure of speech which makes direct comparison between two entities or events. According to Abrams (1981:63), in a metaphor, a lexeme which in standard (literal) usage denotes one kind of thing, quality, or action is applied to another in the form of an identify instead of comparison (i.e. simile). For example, the lexeme *mbè* 'tortoise' in the sentence below:

- 61     Àmadi wu *mbè*  
          'Amadi is a tortoise'

is directly applied to Amadi who possesses the quality of trickiness. Metaphor can also be seen as a source of expression in Owerre Igbo and can give rise to polysemy in the dialect. Thus, a number of metaphors in Owerre Igbo radiate from the central or core meaning to metaphorical meaning, while keeping the central meaning. Consider the following examples:

Fig. 6: *Polysemous Lexemes and their Literal and Transferred Meaning*

| S/N | Polysemous Lexeme (Metaphor) | Literal/Original Meaning                       | Transferred/Metaphorical Meaning | Matrix (Sentence Frame)                       |
|-----|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 2   | agụ(N)                       | tiger = a large fierce animal                  | 'a powerful person'              | òkòrò wu agụ<br>'Okoro is powerful'           |
| 3   | usụ (N)                      | bat = a small animal that flies in the night   | 'an ugly person'                 | I wu usụ<br>'you are ugly'                    |
| 4   | akpì(N)                      | scorpion = a small animal with poisonous sting | 'a very wicked person'           | òbi wu akpì<br>'Obi is very wicked'           |
| 5   | agwọ(N)                      | snake = a dangerous animal                     | 'a dangerous person'             | Nwòhke ahụ wu agwọ<br>'That man is dangerous' |
| 6   | nwaànyị(N)                   | woman = the female or weaker sex               | 'a weakling'                     | Unòka wu nwaànyị<br>'Unoka is a weakling'     |
| 7   | àkpĩrì(N)                    | throat = a part of the                         | 'greed/desire'                   | Ada wu onye àkpĩrì                            |

|     |          |                                                |                               |                                                  |
|-----|----------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
|     |          | human body                                     |                               | ‘Ada is one who longs or desires something’      |
| 8   | igwè(N)  | iron= a piece of metal                         | ‘strength’                    | Nna yà wụ igwè<br>‘His father is strong’         |
| 9   | nkịta(N) | dog = an animal                                | ‘a promiscuous person’        | Òkonkwo wụ nkịta<br>‘Okonkwo is promiscuous’     |
| 10  | ugò(N)   | eagle = a kind of bird                         | ‘a beautiful person’          | Nwàànyị aḥụ wụ ùgò<br>‘That woman is beautiful’  |
| 11. | anya (N) | eye = a part of the human body used for seeing | ‘foresight’                   | Nne yà nwě̀rè ànyà<br>‘Her mother has foresight’ |
| 12  | ọcha(N)  | White = a colour term                          | ‘honesty or purity’           | Akà ya rị ùchà<br>‘She is honest/pure’           |
| 13  | nkhụ(N)  | firewood = stick used in cooking               | ‘an emaciated or bony person’ | Udo wụ nkhụ<br>‘Ùdo is emaciated’                |

It should be noted, however that these metaphorical connections are not based on objective similarities. In the case of metaphor, there are always two terms present. These terms, according to Ullmann, there are always two terms present. These terms, according to Ullmann (1962:213), include the thing we are talking about and that to which we are comparing it. For polysemous lexemes, the similarity between the two forms is the common element underlying the transfer.

### 6.1 Sources of Polysemy in Owere Igbo

Many factors can give rise to polysemy in a language. In this section, we shall discuss three main factors that may give rise to polysemy in Owere Igbo. These are metaphorical extension, connotative and reflected meaning, and semantic over-load as discussed below.

#### 6.1.1 Polysemy and Metaphorical Extension

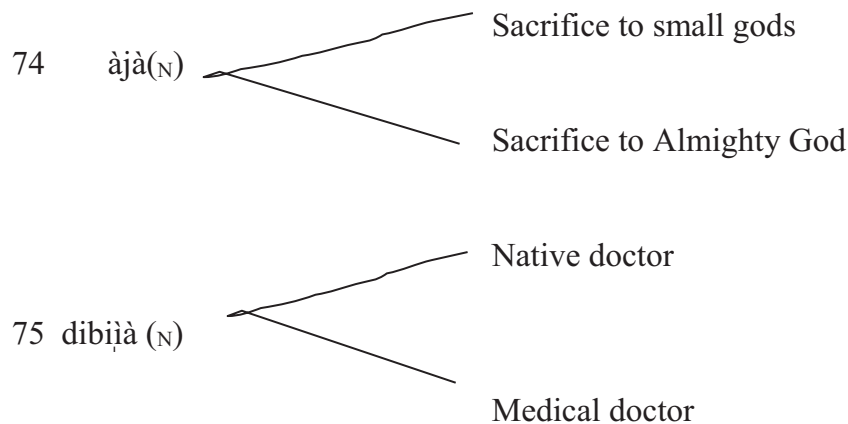
The meaning of a lexeme is said to be extended when it is widened to accommodate other senses. A lexeme whose meaning is extended has undergone a semantic shift or semantic transfer. As Ndimele (1999:88) notes, “a word can undergo a ‘semantic shift’ or ‘semantic transfer’ when its central meaning is shifted to accommodate the meaning of another entity...” All speakers of a language know that lexemes can undergo shifts in application or meaning. According to Sweester (1990:9), no historical shift of meaning can take place without an intervening stage of polysemy. If, for instance, a lexeme once meant A and now means B, it is apparently the case that speakers did not just wake up and switch meanings, rather there was a stage when the lexeme both meant A and B,

and the earlier meaning eventually was lost. In other words, when a lexeme undergoes a semantic shift, it may acquire new senses or lose some of the existing or earlier meanings. This is due to the nature of meaning. Meaning is not a static phenomenon. It keeps changing. For some lexemes, some of the senses develop into permanent shades of meaning. According to Lyons (1995:59):

One of the principle factors operative in semantic change is metaphorical extension, as when ‘foot’ meaning “terminal part of a leg” also came to mean ‘lowest part of a hill or mountain’.

The lexeme Xerox, as Akmajian et al. (1990) note, has undergone a semantic shift (extension) from its original meaning (i.e. as a brand of machine) to mean the act of photocopying.

Similarly in Owerre Igbo, the meaning of the lexeme *àjà*(N) ‘sacrifice made to small gods’ has been extended to accommodate ‘sacrifice to Almighty God’. Again the meaning of the lexeme *dibìà* (N) ‘native doctor’ has also been extended to embrace ‘medical doctor’.



Other examples of extended meaning are shown on fig. 6 below:

Fig. 7: Polysemy and Metaphorical Extension

| S/No | Polysemous Lexeme | Central/Core Meaning        | Metaphorical/Extended Meaning                                   |
|------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 76   | ụkwụ(N)           | leg(N) = part of the body   | End part of the chair (e.g. ụkwụ _ochè ‘end part of the chair’) |
| 77   | anya(N)           | eye(N) = part of the body   | An opening in a needle (e.g. anya_ndịdị ‘eye of the needle’)    |
| 78   | aka(N)            | hand(N) = part of the body  | Handle (e.g. aka àkpà ‘handle of a bag’)                        |
| 79   | ọnụ (N)           | mouth(N) = part of the body | An aperture or opening (e.g. ọnụ_mkpu ‘ant hole’)               |
| 80   | ihụ (N)           | face(N) = part of the body  | Front part (e.g. iñu ezhi ‘front of the compound’)              |
| 81   | ishi(N)           | head(N) = part of the body  | First part or leader (e.g. onyè ishi àlà ‘a head of state’)     |

In Owere Igbo, as in other languages, some expressions referring to inanimate objects are taken by transfer from the human body and its parts. Hence, the human body and its parts (e.g. eye, face hand, etc) have been described as the centre of metaphorical uses or extensions (cf. Ullmann 1962). For instance, the lexemes *iñu*(N) ‘face’, *aka*(N) ‘hand’, *anya*(N) ‘eye’, *olu*(N) ‘neck’, *ukwu*(N) ‘leg’, etc, may be applied to a wide range of objects reminiscent of the organs as we have in cases of the Owere Igbo lexemes, *anya ndịdị* ‘eye of the needle’ and *ukwu àkwà* ‘end part of the bed’, which are extensions of the lexemes *anya* ‘eye’ and *ukwu*;foot’ (parts of the body) respectively. According to Lyons,

It is metaphorical extension... that is at issue when one refers to the related meanings of polysemous lexemes. There are of course, other kinds of relatedness of meaning which are irrelevant in this connection.

It must be mentioned that a great deal of polysemy in Owere Igbo is due to metaphorical usage or figurative expression. As we noted earlier, one of the senses of a polysemous lexeme is central, while the other senses may be figurative or metaphorical extensions of the central meaning.

### 6.1.2 Polysemy and Connotative Meaning

Polysemy can be treated in terms of connotative and reflected meanings since other senses of a polysemous lexeme are associated with core or central meaning which is the conceptual sense. Examples of polysemous lexemes which are idioms and which have connotations different from their ordinary or literal meanings are shown below:

Fig. 8: *Polysemy and Connotative Meaning*

| S/No | Polysemous Lexeme (Idiom) | Literal Meaning                            | Connotative Meaning                                         |
|------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 82   | inwe ukwụ oma             | ‘to have good or fine legs’                | ‘to have good luck’                                         |
| 83   | iriju afo                 | ‘to be satisfied (or be filled with food)’ | ‘to become pregnant’                                        |
| 84   | inwe anya ukwu            | ‘to have bulging eyes’                     | ‘to be greedy’                                              |
| 85   | iri ñe òmù ntàkiri        | ‘to eat food kept for children’            | ‘to have sexual intercourse with children (the under aged)’ |

The examples above show that the various meanings of the idioms are related though in a remote sense. While one of the meanings is literal, the other has either favourable or unfavourable connotation.

### 6.1.3 Polysemy and Reflected Meaning

A lexeme may acquire an additional semantic meaning or connotation in the language that such a lexeme may no longer be freely used without any form of



unfavourable connotation or negative sense of disapproval. Example, in Owerre Igbo, *nwa nkpi* 'he-goat' signifies the male species of goat without any connotation. But this lexeme is not always freely used without some form of unfavourable connotation because it is also used to refer to 'an ugly man', that is, its reflected meaning. The lexeme *nwa nkpi* 'he-goat', is therefore, polysemous.

Another example can be seen in the lexeme *àkpìrì* 'throat' which also means desire or ambition, but it also has a negative connotation which is greed as in *onye àkpìrì* 'a greedy person'. Because of the negative connotation (i.e. the reflected meaning) of the lexemes *nwa mkpi* and *àkpìrì*, 'goat and throat', they are not freely used since the unfavourable senses have suppressed the literal meanings.

Ndimele (1999:39) observes that the consequence of reflected meaning is that a particular sense of a lexeme continues to attract prominence due to its frequency of use, while the other senses disappear or become less dominant. However, the lexemes *nwa mkpi* and *àkpìrì* take a favourable or an unfavourable significance according to the context in which they occur. Reflected meaning can result from meaning or semantic change. According to Wierzbicka (1996:24),

... meaning can change and they may vary from one dialect, sociolect or 'generatiolect' to another. But semantic change as such is not gradual; only the spread of semantic change is (one meaning may gradually disappear, another may gradually spread...

#### 6.1.4 Polysemy and Semantic Overload

Polysemy can also arise from some social factors such as semantic overload. Semantic overload is a situation where a particular lexeme becomes too generous due to usage to attract several other meanings to it (Ndimele 1999:98). There are, thus, some lexemes in Owerre Igbo that have attracted wide range of meanings such that the polysemous lexeme becomes vague except when used in a particular context. That is, it may not be easy to determine the exact sense in which the lexeme is being used. For example, the lexeme *ugbo* in the following expression has varied meanings:

- 86     Okorie zùrù *ugbo* *ohụ*  
           Okorie bought a new 'car'/ship'/canoe'

This could mean that Okorie bought a new motor car or ship or canoe, etc. The lexeme *ugbo* is therefore, semantically overloaded that the precise meaning is difficult to determine, except from the context or situation. Another example is the lexeme *anụ* 'meat' in the following sentence:

- 87     Eze gbùrù *anụ*  
           'Eze killed a 'goat'/'cow'/'dog'/'pig'

*Anụ* in the above expression could mean that Eze killed a goat or cow or dog or monkey, or pig. The precise meaning can only be determined from the context. *Mmịi* 'raffia palm wine'/palm tree-wine'/alcoholic wine' is also another example, since to say *mmịi* does not specify the particular brand or wine as in,

88      O jè ānụ mmịi  
            'He drinks wine'

### 7.1 Conclusion

Our analysis of polysemous lexemes in Owere Igbo further reveals that polysemous lexemes belong to the following word classes: nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbial nouns in Igbo. According to our data, the various meanings of a polysemous lexeme belong to the same word class. We differentiated between the different but related senses of a polysemous lexeme we also distinguished between the primary and secondary senses and the literal and transferred meanings of a polysemous lexeme. Our findings revealed that for a polysemous lexeme, there are primary and secondary senses. The primary sense is the sense which corresponds to the denotative meaning and the one which most Owere Igbo speakers will first think of when they hear the lexeme in isolation and which is least dependent on context. The secondary senses, on the other hand, are assumed to have derived from the primary sense and correspond to associative meaning. We further argued that the transferred or metaphorical meanings are derived from the literal or original meaning. We also noted in this work that factors such as meaning extension, semantic overload, etc. can give rise to Polysemy in Owere Igbo.

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## 49. Meaning and the Interpretation of Signs and Symbols

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Semantics and Semiotics are both concerned with the meaning of signs and symbols. Contemporary studies in meaning and communication view signs and symbols as part of semiotics. Semiotics studies how meanings are made from signs and symbols and how these are concerned with communication as well as the construction and maintenance of reality. This paper studies signs and symbols as an integral part of communication and reality in contemporary Nigeria. Selected signs and symbols are studied within Saussurian and Piercean theories of signs, that is, the role of signs in everyday social life (de Saussure) and signs as something that 'stands for' something or somebody in some capacity or respect. The paper concludes that signs and symbols are meaningful only within the reality of the society in which they are used, regardless of cultural orientation and that it is possible for different cultures to perceive signs and symbols the same way (e.g. traffic signs, which are international and not culture-specific), or differently (as in culture-specific signs and symbols). However, our study shows that some of these signs and symbols, international or culture-specific, were still not interpretable or meaningful to some of our subjects.

### 1. Introduction

The study of signs and symbols is very important in human communication. Communication takes place not only verbally, using language, but also non-verbally through the use of gestures as well as signs and symbols. Semiotics is a field of research which investigates the emergence of meaning and symbolic systems. It studies the life of signs within a society. It was born when French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure formulated his theory of language, published posthumously at the beginning of the century. Semiotics extends the concept of language to include not only words but many systems of communication. Semiotics is a vast area of enquiry covering the ways we create and interpret patterns in all aspects of social and cultural behaviour, including different ways of communicating, deliberate as well as non-deliberate, (sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch-) and it can cover all contexts, including clothing, politics, eating, or housing. There are four main lines of development within the history of semiotics: the philosophical study of symbols, the analysis of language, empirical research on communication and the semiotics of culture.

The basic unit in semiotics is the *sign*, which can be defined as any symbol or form that has a conventional meaning within a particular community. *Sign* is a broad term that includes visual symbols, conventional gestures, words and other types of non-verbal communication, the study of which gives a better and deeper understanding of communication processes.

### 1.1 Signs and Symbols

The term *sign* was introduced around 1900 by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who is sometimes called the father of modern linguistics. Saussure's originally used *sign* as a category under *symbol*, but later on the two words were inverted so that *symbol* became the category under *sign*. Charles Sanders Peirce, the American philosopher, was developing semiotics about the same time. He inverts the words *sign* and *symbol*, making *sign* the general word and *symbol* the convention-based sign. It is this use that we have adopted in this article.

#### *Sign (symbol in Saussurian terminology)*

Signs are events or things that direct attention or are indicative of other events or things. Basically, anything that represents something else is a sign. A sign has a certain structure that Saussure first defined as the association between a signifier and a signified. Using a word as an example of a sign, De Saussure showed that a word had two parts - a concept and a sound image. The two must go together: we cannot talk about the concept without the word, and the word without the concept would just be a sound without meaning. De Saussure referred to the concept part of the meaning as the *signified* and called the sound image part the *signifier*. The two, the concept and word, together make up the sign and cannot be separated. For instance, in the human mind, the word *tree* is connected to a concept of a tree. Without the concept, the word is just a sequence of letters which represents nothing but those letters. If the word *tree* has nothing to represent, then it is nothing but itself; it is not a sign. The sign requires the presence of both the signifier *tree* and the signified, the concept.

Instead of the binary relationship of signifier and signified established by Saussure, Peirce uses a triangular model: object-sign-interpretant. To Peirce, a sign is anything that stands for something in somebody's mind. This "something" is called the sign's object; the "somebody" is called its interpretant.

Following Peirce, semioticians often draw a distinction between *icons*, *indexes* (or *indices*) and *symbols*. These are regarded as the three large groups of *signs*.

#### *Icon*

Simply put, an icon looks like its *signified*. There is no real connection between an object and an icon of it other than the likeness, so the mind is required to see the similarity and associate the two. Icons are signs whose signifier bears a close resemblance to the thing they refer to. Thus a photograph of me can be said to be highly iconic because it looks like me. A road sign showing the silhouette of a car and a motorbike is highly iconic because the silhouettes look like a motorbike and a car, so also are pictographs such as are used on "pedestrian crossing" sign. A characteristic of the icon is that by observing it, we can derive information about its signified. For instance, an image of an unknown object will give an idea of what it looks like in real life. It may lack details, but it will still give an idea of its appearance such that it is recognizable in the real life. Icons include *Images* (like portraits and computer icons); *Diagrams* (representing relationships of parts rather than tangible features, like algebraic formulae; +, -, =); and finally, *metaphors* (widely used in poetry and language).

*Index*

An *index* has a causal and/or sequential relationship to its signified. It is a sign whose signifier we have learnt to associate with a particular signified. Indices are directly perceivable events that can act as a reference to events that are not directly perceivable, or in other words they are something visible that indicates something out of sight. For example, smoke that is seen indicates that a fire is burning, even if one cannot see the fire. So, we may see smoke as an index of 'fire'; a thermometer is an index of 'temperature'. In the same way, tears can indicate sadness (or joy, as the case may be). The nature of the index has nothing to do with that of the signified, but the connection here is logical and organic – the two elements are inseparable – and there is little or no participation of the mind. Indices are generally non-deliberate, except for arrows which, are just one example of deliberate ones. Peirce's index includes first names, relative pronouns, and the letters attached to a diagram, like labels.

*Symbol (sign in saussurian terminology)*

A symbol represents something in a completely arbitrary relationship. The connection between signifier and signified depends entirely on the observer, or more exactly, what the observer was taught. Symbols are subjective, dictated either by social convention or by habit. Words are a prime example of symbols. Whether as a group of sounds or a group of characters, they are only linked to their signified because the society decides they are – and because the connection is neither physical nor logical, words change meaning or objects change names as time goes by. Here it all happens in the mind and depends on it. Symbols are ideas, and whenever we use one, we are only pointing to the idea behind that symbol. Even when the symbol no longer exists, the idea still remains intact. A symbol can rarely tell us anything more about its signifier than we already know.

**1.2 Social/Cultural Dimensions of Signs**

Saussure saw language as being an ordered system of signs whose meanings are arrived at arbitrarily by a cultural convention. When we say something is 'arbitrary', we mean that there's no good reason for it. By saying that signs are arbitrary, we are saying that there is no good reason why we use the sequence of sounds to mean a particular thing. Most words, except for onomatopoeic words, are symbolic signs and there is no natural relationship between them and their meanings. The road sign with the motorbike and car has iconic elements, but it also has symbolic elements: a white background with a red circle around it. These signify 'something is forbidden' simply because we have agreed that that is what they mean. Also, there is no necessary reason why a tree should be called a tree. Any other sequence of words within the language could have been used. The only requirement is that everybody in the language group agrees that whatever is called a *house* should refer to that place where we live in the real world. As long as there is general agreement, that's no problem – until you start talking about *house* to people who don't share the same convention.

These three categories are however not mutually exclusive. A sign could very well be all three at the same time. Also, the fact that a sign is iconic does not make it more natural than any other sign. With any kind of sign, the cultural conventions involved have to be learnt. Convention is necessary to the



understanding of any sign, however iconic or indexical it is. Convention is the social dimension of signs: it is the agreement amongst the users about the appropriate uses of and responses to a sign. According to Underwood,

The road sign consists of:  
one **symbolic** sign (the triangle),  
which means 'Watch out' because we  
agree that's what it means - it's  
arbitrary; it could just as well be a  
square, circle, octagon, plastic model  
of a prune etc.

one **iconic** sign - it looks like a  
man at work. Think, though, of  
the extent to which that is  
determined by our culture. There  
are certain conventions at work  
here too. For example, it could be  
a man struggling to put up an  
umbrella. In a more rural culture,  
it could be read as a man  
shoveling manure, rather than  
road repair materials. In cultures  
where women do such menial  
work, it could pass for a woman  
shoveling manure.



||



symbolic

+



iconic



In this sign, there are two rounded  
rectangles and the iconic  
representation of a man.

The rectangles are not signs - they do not  
signify, as we have no agreed meaning for  
them.

The sign of the man is iconic because it looks  
like a man BUT think of how we represent  
women on such signs: they appear to wear  
skirts. In another culture, this sign could be  
taken to look like a human being, but it might  
be unclear whether it was a man or a woman.  
So there's a cultural element in our  
understanding of that sign. Further, it doesn't  
normally mean 'man', but, rather, 'only men  
are allowed past here' - again an  
understanding which arises because we agree  
that's what it means.



Here again, the same sort of elements -

| signifier                                       | signified              |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| the symbolic red circle on a white background = | something is forbidden |
| the iconic cigarette =                          | cigarette              |

but here there is an additional element, the bar, which is indexical:

|                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| the indexical bar = | you can't get to this |
|---------------------|-----------------------|

We associate with a barrier or with crossing something out. Interestingly, this seems to be quite common on signs which are derived from road signs, though not on road signs themselves. For example, the road sign which means 'no bicycles' simply has a bike in a red circle; the road sign which means 'no vehicles' simply has a red circle. Neither has a bar across. Maybe the designers of such non-road-signs felt impelled to include the bar as an indexical sign for non-drivers unfamiliar with road signs?



There are symbolic elements only in this sign.

It's interesting to note how relatively inexplicit the sign is. We might, for example, expect '30+' with a line through it or '<30'. As with other signs, it doesn't have to be all that explicit - we learn what it means and that's all there is to it.

Fiske 1982

There is no doubt that the values of our culture are incorporated into the sign-systems we use. Language exists as a structured system of symbolic representations, that is, *systems of signs with meaning*. When we refer to a chair, it means that it is to be sat on, not to put a frying pan on. The objects in our environment, the gestures and words we use derive their meanings from the *sign systems* to which they belong. The sign systems we use are not somehow given or natural. They are a development of our culture and therefore carry cultural meanings and values. They shape the consciousness of individuals, forming us into social beings.

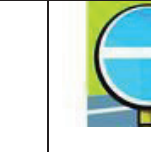
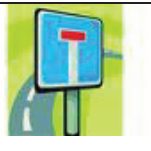
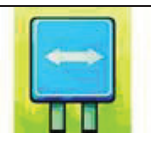
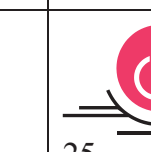
Kristeva (1980) says that *any* social practice is 'articulated like a language'. Any social practice has meanings which arise from the code it uses. Everything in our social life has *the potential to mean*, but not everything does mean. Wearing clothes in our society doesn't signify much in itself - though not wearing them certainly does! But the type of clothes a man wears signifies something; it tells a lot about who he is likely to be (a Rev Father/Sister, An Imam, a Muslim woman etc.) Since the codes we use are located within specific cultures, it should not be surprising that those codes express and support the social organization of those cultures. Thus, signification is not neutral, but has value within the society.

### 1.3 Interpretation of signs

The present study is an attempt to discover how people interpret selected signs and symbols that are supposed to be part of their reality. Two categories of signs were chosen for this study. The first was road signs; the second was general symbols some of which are iconic and part of social, cultural and religious life and may therefore be relatively transparent. Our subjects are professional cab drivers and motorcycle (aka *okada*) drivers who operate within and outside the University of Jos premises. The method used was that of random sampling, carried out by oral interviews and often in groups. These subjects were shown and asked to identify the signs they were familiar with and also to tell us what the signs meant to them. A total of about 40 cabdrivers and 30 motorcycle riders (number is not

precise since sampling was random) were interviewed. It is expected that as professional drivers, they should be familiar with road signs; this is a requirement for obtaining a professional driver's license. Among the 40 cab drivers were three mechanics and a part-time undergraduate student. We showed a total of 39 road signs and 21 other symbolic signs which are either iconic or culture-bound and could be interpreted through experience. In addition to these, the subjects were asked to interpret specific signs/icons which are culturally bound and are located strategically within the Jos metropolis. The objective is to find out whether or not the people are aware of any communicative potential of these signs.

Tables 1 and 2 represent the signs and symbols to be interpreted. Table 3 is the responses we got.

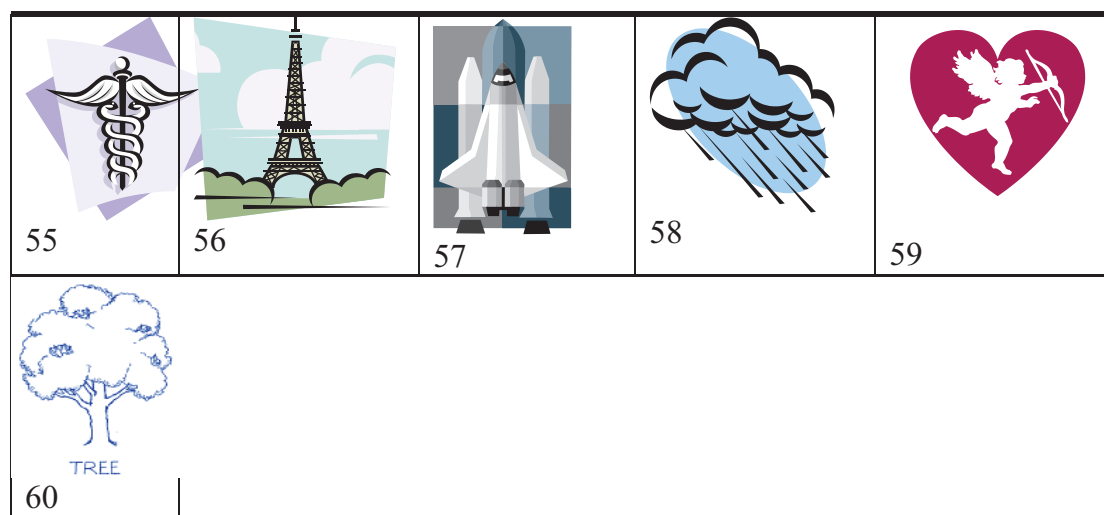
|                                                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                                                      |                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    |    |    |    |    |
| 1                                                                                   | 2                                                                                   | 3                                                                                   | 4                                                                                    | 5                                                                                     |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 6                                                                                   | 7                                                                                   | 8                                                                                   | 9                                                                                    | 10                                                                                    |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 11                                                                                  | 12                                                                                  | 13                                                                                  | 14                                                                                   | 15                                                                                    |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 16                                                                                  | 17                                                                                  | 18                                                                                  | 19                                                                                   | 20                                                                                    |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 21                                                                                  | 22                                                                                  | 23                                                                                  | 24                                                                                   | 25                                                                                    |

|                                                                                         |                                                                                         |                                                                                         |                                                                                          |                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <br>26 | <br>27 | <br>28 | <br>29 | <br>30 |
| <br>31 | <br>32 | <br>33 | <br>34  | <br>35 |
| <br>36 | <br>37 | <br>38 | <br>39 |                                                                                           |

Table1: Road/Traffic Signs

Table 2: Symbols

|                                                                                           |                                                                                           |                                                                                           |                                                                                            |                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <br>40 | <br>41 | <br>42 | <br>43 | <br>44 |
| <br>45 | <br>46 | <br>47 | <br>48 | <br>49 |
| <br>50 | <br>51 | <br>52 | <br>53 | <br>54 |



Retrieved from <http://www.barrysclipart.com/>

Table 3A: Responses- Road/Traffic Signs

|    |                    |    |                                      |
|----|--------------------|----|--------------------------------------|
| 1  | No response        | 21 | No parking student/driver, mechanic) |
| 2  | Turn left          | 22 | Turn right; no right turn            |
| 3  | Car                | 23 | Traffic light                        |
| 4  | Turn left          | 24 | Court; no horn                       |
| 5  | u-turn             | 25 | Driver's seat; disable (mechanic)    |
| 6  | Double lane (all)  | 26 | 50; speed limit                      |
| 7  | Pedestrian         | 27 | Rocky area (student/driver)          |
| 8  | Arrow              | 28 | Railway crossing (all-drivers)       |
| 9  | No response        | 29 | Bicycle                              |
| 10 | Turn right         | 30 | No response                          |
| 11 | t-junction         | 31 | Baby                                 |
| 12 | Go                 | 32 | Slippery road (student/driver)       |
| 13 | Food is here       | 33 | Major road (mechanic)                |
| 14 | No response        | 34 | No response                          |
| 15 | Hospital           | 35 | Bend; bend right                     |
| 16 | Two lanes          | 36 | Bicycle                              |
| 17 | Car                | 37 | Aeroplane; airport                   |
| 18 | Turn right or left | 38 | Pedestrian (crossing)                |
| 19 | Stop               | 39 | Children; animals                    |
| 20 | Bend; double bend  |    |                                      |

Table 3b. Responses – Symbols

|    |                                    |    |                                  |
|----|------------------------------------|----|----------------------------------|
| 40 | Court, judge                       | 52 | Mosque                           |
| 41 | Fulani herdsman; angel             | 53 | Morning ;(mechanic) day; sun     |
| 42 | Criminal (all)                     | 54 | UNICEF (student/driver)          |
| 43 | Prison (all)                       | 55 | Doctor's logo (mechanic)         |
| 44 | Music(student/driver; one mechanic | 56 | No response                      |
| 45 | Sound (mechanic)                   | 57 | Aeroplane; space(mechanic)       |
| 46 | No response                        | 58 | Cloud (student)                  |
| 47 | Dog                                | 59 | Love (mechanic; student/ driver) |



|    |                               |    |            |
|----|-------------------------------|----|------------|
| 48 | Telephone here (one mechanic) | 60 | Tree (all) |
| 49 | Railway; church               |    |            |
| 50 | Rev. Sister                   |    |            |
| 51 | Doctor                        |    |            |

#### 1.4 Discussion

Table A consists of Traffic/Road signs which are supposed to give information to and guide road users. Each sign has a symbolic shape (triangle, circle etc.) which signals “Watch out for...”, in other words directing attention to something or someone represented iconically within the symbolic shape. So an arrow going right or left or straight, gives directions as to where to go; so does a bend to the right or left. A bicycle, a man, etc. are interpreted as “watch out for...” In addition, some signs have a bold line across the object from one end of the circle or triangle to the other end. This symbolic line is associated with prohibition. This type of sign is interpreted as “whatever is inside the circle or triangle is banned.” That means that a right turn with a bar across means, “No right turn”. A circle with no bar means, “Keep going”, while a circle with a bar means, “No entry.” A cigarette, telephone, child etc. within a circle with a bar across the circle means no smoking, no use of telephone and no children, respectively. The notion of the sign, especially road signs, is particularly useful for visual language. These can all be understood by people who do not share a common language but who do share an agreed understanding of what these visual signs or signifiers mean. In the case of our subjects, the majority had no idea of how to interpret the signs. The only signs almost everyone was able to interpret were traffic lights and the railway crossing. Only a very few of the drivers; 2 mechanic/drivers, one student/driver and four others, gave a few correct interpretations. All the interpretations given are reflected in Table 3a. This researcher ended up giving the drivers a lecture on road signs and how to interpret them. Copies of the road signs used for this study and others not used were distributed to the drivers. The okada drivers showed no interest as they claimed that road signs had nothing to do with them.

Table 3b shows the interpretations of symbols reflected in Table2. Symbols 46 and 56 were the only two symbols that generated no response at all from any of our respondents, and that is understandable. Both symbols are not within the culture of the respondents. The symbols in this table were easier for our respondents to interpret mainly because of their iconicity. A driver/mechanic interpreted 41 (Angel) as a Fulani herdsman. He justified his answer by saying that the herdsman was using his special type of ‘flute’ to gather his cattle together. The same person interpreted 49 (Church) as a railway station. He completely missed the cross on top of the building. The handcuffs in 42 and barred window in 43 aided interpretation as ‘criminal’ and ‘prison’ respectively.

It is obvious for this exercise that respondents were able to understand icons better than any other signs. As the interview was conducted orally, we decided to ask them about certain symbols that are part of their every day reality so as to find out whether or not what they see every day holds any meaning for them.



**Other symbols**

- a. At the public toilet at the new market, two doors are identified; one has the portrait of a man, the other the portrait of a woman. Which one would they choose to enter through? Why?



All made the right choice. They were able to recognise the portraits because the portraits are iconic.

- b. The sculpture of a woman carrying a load on her head and a baby on her back; found at the Terminus roundabout. Answer-Mama Tapgun

This is the only answer we got from all our respondents. Asked whether the icon signified anything, the answer common to all was that it was a political matter: the former Governor of Plateau State, Mr. Fidelis Tapgun (19- ) had the image erected so that the people of Plateau State would have something to remember him by. One respondent suggested that the image could have been erected to celebrate womanhood, to show that plateau women are hard-working both as mothers and breadwinners.

- c. At the Secretariat junction, there is a pillar on which stands a round object. Answer: - Football.

Those who chose to respond offered some explanation. The football shows that the people of the state love football. Not everyone agreed though. Some said in the cases of (a) and (b) and others at roundabouts and junctions, the images are meant only to beautify the environment and have no special meanings.

- d. Shape of Plateau state, represented in books and on television. Answer - Just the map.

This map is iconic. It is uncannily like a rock formation as you enter Plateau State from the Ryom end. Only one driver/mechanic had seen the rock formation and noted the resemblance to the map of Plateau state. The rock is a sort of tourist attraction.

**1.5 Conclusion**

Communication is defined as the process of transferring data from a source to a receiver as efficiently and as effectively as possible. Signs are a way through which information can be transferred, the receiver must be able to decode the data and make meaning out of it. Semioticians classify signs and sign-systems in relation to the way they are transmitted. A sign may be a word, like table. It can be a gesture, like a nod or a shake of the head or a handshake. It can be a pattern of sound, like booing or cheering, laughing or crying. It can be a picture, an image or even the clothes people wear. The important thing is that there is an agreed understanding of the meaning of the sign within a certain social group, the values of whose culture are being represented.

One thing our study has shown is that it appeared that either nobody bothered to educate drivers about how to read and interpret road signs, or they were badly educated. If drivers could identify and interpret road signs correctly, they claimed, there would certainly be fewer cases of road accidents. Unfortunately, nobody has ever taught them to read and interpret road signs.

As stated earlier, the objects in our environment, the gestures and words we use derive their meanings from the sign systems to which they belong. The sign systems are a development of our culture and therefore carry cultural meanings and values. They shape the consciousness of individuals, forming us into social beings. One had the uncomfortable feeling that many of our respondents living in this society do not seem 'belonged'. "Only the indigenes will know the meaning of that" is the answer we got frequently from some so-called non-indigenes, who were born and bred in Jos! Those we interviewed were partly educated. The highest education level among our respondents is the West African School Certificate (WASC) O'Level:- two driver/mechanics and one student/driver. Others are largely uneducated. A lot of people, represented by our respondents, do not seem to be aware or bothered about what is around them. As some of our respondents concluded, it is good to know what is going on around us.

The next target of this work is the educated elite, including women. The result of that work should shed more light on the consciousness of the individual to his environment and how much communication is achieved through the use of signs as objects of socialization.

### **1.6 Recommendations**

Road signs are international. That means that interpretation is the same all over the world where these signs are used regardless of the language one speaks. Driving and reading road signs abroad should therefore not be a problem for a competent driver. It is also a known fact that in present-day Nigeria, most drivers no longer take and pass a driving test before they are let loose on our roads. We recommend a return to the pre-1990 era when every driver was required not only to learn to drive properly, but also to learn the Highway Code before taking a driving test. None of the drivers interviewed knew that any such thing as Highway Code exists: only two ever took a test but never admitted to either passing or failing the test.

We also recommend that the state governments find a way of reaching the masses, especially those who are resident in areas to whose ethnic groups they do not belong, so that they at least feel part of the culture of the society and are able to identify with it. It is only when people learn to socialize and feel belonged that communication among the various groups will be effective and meaningful.

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## 50. Directions of Research on Gender & Semantic Markedness

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As the title suggests, this paper traces some of the research so far done on linguistic and semantic markedness in general and gender markedness in particular, noting some grey areas over issues that have so far been taken for granted in this field. The paper, divided into five sub-headings traces the history of markedness in linguistic study, examines what constitutes a marked work, takes a closer look at terms often described as formally marked, and discusses how markedness is assigned to gender in the language. Finally, the parameters of assigning markedness in Igbo language, in accordance with gender, come under a closer investigation. Under this last sub-heading, we cite instances from some types of ill-health and social class, to support the claim of some writers coming after the traditionalist view, that markedness is not inherent in language, rather, is highly influenced by social forces that assign roles to members of the society.

### **1. Introduction: A Historical Overview of Markedness in Linguistics**

Though with differing opinions, both the Jacobsonian structuralism and the Chomskyan generative grammar share a view on markedness as a significant aspect of language study. According to Edwin Battistella (1996), the development of the concept of markedness in the works of Roman Jakobson was what witnessed its subsequent importation into Noam Chomsky's Principles and Parameters framework. Even though the approach by these schools are different, they are united in some important aspects namely, the analysis of binary opposition between abstract classificatory features, and how these may be extended to questions of language acquisition, language decay, and language universals. From the markedness framework of Jakobson, which has spanned more than sixty years, to the works of Chomsky, which is more than thirty years, Battistella observes that "*the meaning of markedness has not remained constant even within a single intellectual framework*" (Battistella, 1996:7).

The key word that unites all kinds of markedness, according to Catherine Chvany (1985) is their "*informativeness*" (Chvany, 1985:248). This view echoes the position of Linda Waugh (1986) that some features of the marked form is necessarily absent in the domain of the unmarked form. The unmarked form in this case "*remains neutral, uncommitted*" (Waugh, 1986:86). In a later article, Waugh submits that the marked term is opposed to the unmarked one by the characteristic of the marked to exhibit a "*constraining, focusing characteristic*" (Waugh, 1982:300).

Indeed the earliest use of the terms marked and unmarked, according to Jakobson (1975) was by Nikolai Trubetzkoy, on July 31, 1930 in a paper titled

“Letters and Notes”. Trubetzkoy had used the two terms to suggest that a phonological correlation “acquires in linguistic consciousness the form of an opposition between the presence of some features and its absence” (Trubetzkoy, in Jacobson, 1975:162). The markedness oppositions of Trubetzkoy strikes a cord similar to the features of markedness by Chvany and Waugh discussed above, as well as the positions of Michael Shapiro (1983). According to Trubetzkoy, an opposition involves a relation which acquires in linguistic consciousness the presence of some features and its absence. In Shapiro’s own contribution, the writer submits the following resounding views on markedness:

The marked item of an opposition has a narrowed referential scope, while the unmarked term is broader in the scope of application to the field of reference (Shapiro, 1983:16).

## 2. The Marked Word

A word is marked when it occupies a marginal space, as opposed to its pair. In each pair of antonyms for instance, the unmarked pair is the one used to ask questions or to describe the degree of gradable quality. The other member, the marked, is hardly used to mention degree.

Examples:

1. How **far** is the journey?
2. How **near** is the journey?
3. What is the **height** of the bridge? / How high is the bridge?
4. What is the **lowness** of the bridge? / How low is the bridge?

In the first of the two pairs of sentences above, no assumption is implied by the first questions, but the second questions imply that the journey is near, or that the bridge is near, as the case may be. The first of these examples contain semantically unmarked adjectives (far, high) whereas the second are semantically marked (near, low).

Some Igbo verbs and their complements that help in the construction of pairs of antonyms are semantically marked. For instance:

- |    |                               |     |                              |
|----|-------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|
| 5. | <i>cha ocha</i><br>(white vs  | vs. | <i>ji nji</i><br>black)      |
| 6. | <i>to ogologo</i><br>(tall    | vs. | <i>da mkpumkpu</i><br>short) |
| 7. | <i>bu ibu</i> vs<br>(fat      | vs. | <i>ta ahu</i><br>lean/thin)  |
| 8. | <i>to uto</i> vs<br>(sweet vs |     | <i>lu ilu</i><br>bitter)     |

- 
- |     |                                                                                                                                                      |     |                                                                                       |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9.  | <i>Olee etu uwe ya si <b>acha</b>?</i><br>(How <b>white</b> is her cloth?)                                                                           | vs. | <i>Olee etu uwe ya si <b>iji</b>?</i><br>How <b>dark</b> is her cloth?)               |
| 10. | <i>O toruru <b>ogologo</b> ka osisi a?</i><br>(Is he as <b>tall</b> as this tree?)                                                                   | vs. | <i>O daruru <b>mkpumkpu</b> ka osisi a?</i><br>Is he as <b>short</b> as this tree?)   |
| 11. | <i>Ogwu a, o na-<b>ato</b> ka gini?</i><br>(This drug, is it as <b>sweet</b> as what?<br>(To what extent can we compare the taste of this medicine?) | vs. | <i>Ogwu a o na-<b>elu</b> ka gini?</i><br>This drug, is it as <b>bitter</b> as what?) |
| 12. | <i>Olee etu o ha n'<b>ibu</b>?</i><br>(How <b>big</b> is he?)                                                                                        | vs. | <i>Olee etu o ha na <b>ntaramaahu</b>?</i><br>How <b>thin</b> is he?)                 |

As observed by researcher on markedness, this feature varies across languages. For instance, Palmers (1996) and Graddol and others (1996) note that whereas English has the term “thickness gauge”, Japanese uses the term “thinness gauge” both of which refer to a particular yardstick in measurement.

### 3. Formally Marked Terms

Broadly speaking, there are some pairs of words which are referred to as formally marked. These are words that have affixes that distinguish them from the unmarked pairs. English examples include the following:

| <i>Unmarked Term</i> | <i>Marked Term</i> | <i>Distinguishing Affix</i> |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| approve              | <b>dis</b> approve | <b>dis-</b>                 |
| happy                | <b>un</b> happy    | <b>un-</b>                  |
| lion                 | lion <b>ess</b>    | <b>-ess</b>                 |

Igbo examples of formally marked pair include the following, which may bear suffixes and/or other verb stems:

| Unmarked term              | Marked Term                           | Distng. Affix              | Distng. Stem          |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 13. <i>ri</i> (climb (up)) |                                       |                            |                       |
| (a)                        | <i>rida</i><br>(climb (down))         | -                          | <i>da</i><br>(“fall”) |
| (b)                        | <i>ritu</i><br>(climb (down))         | <i>tu</i><br>-             | -                     |
| (c)                        | <i>arila</i><br>(do not climb)        | <i>la</i><br>(neg. marker) | -                     |
| (d)                        | <i>aridala</i><br>(do not climb down) | <i>la</i><br>(neg. marker) | <i>da</i><br>(“fall”) |
| 14. <i>nye</i> (give)      |                                       |                            |                       |
|                            | <i>enyela</i><br>(do not give)        | <i>la</i><br>(neg. marker) | -                     |



---

|     |                                 |                            |                           |
|-----|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 15. | <i>fu</i> (kindle; e.g. fire)   |                            |                           |
| (a) | <i>afula</i><br>(do not kindle) | <i>la</i><br>(neg. marker) | -<br>-                    |
| (b) | <i>funyuo</i><br>(extinguish)   | -<br>-                     | <i>nyu</i><br>("put off") |

Referring to formal markedness of gender as it operates in the English language, Sarah Mills (1995) points to a range of affixes including the following:

-ett  
-enne  
-trix

which are used to refer to women. According to Mills, these markers connote derogatory, trivializing, diminutive and amateurish labels about women in English culture.

#### 4. Assignment of Markedness according to Gender

In studies of gender in language, writers have argued that there is no predictable system in gender assignment as this relates to markedness. According to one popular view put forward by Kalverkamper (1979), the male human agent none is not always the unmarked one. The writer cites the example of the French word for chicken (*la poule*) which is an unmarked feminine gender in distinction to rooster or cock (*la coq*), which is a marked form. Instances of this could be observed in Igbo language whereby the term *aturu* (sheep) is used to represent the entire flock comprising both the ewes: *aturu* and their male counterpart: the ram: *ebule*.

Oftentimes, the term generic is used to describe the use of one pair to represent the two terms within the pair. However, in matters of gender-assignment of markedness in English, David Graddol and Joan Swann (1993) point to the futility of a generic in the *he/man* usage in the context of *he/she* and *man/woman* pairs respectively. Placing the word *man* as male and generic on the one hand and the usage of the generic word *dog* instead of its female counterpart: *bitch*, on the other hand, the two writers above demonstrate that *man* operates as *adult male human being* in contrast to woman. Man, according to this view, can frequently refer to the two sexes, yet the inclusion of the word *woman* in such an analogy would bring to light the awkwardness of *man* as generic. We illustrate Graddol and Swann's (1993) view below:

| <i>Dog as generic for both sexes of animal</i>                              | <i>Man as generic for both sexes of human</i>                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. The <i>dog</i> is a lot younger than the bitch                           | The <i>man</i> is a lot younger than the woman                |
| 2. One of the <i>dogs</i> on the farm is a beautiful Golden Retriever Bitch | One of the <i>men</i> on the farm is a beautiful French woman |
| 3. The <i>dog</i> next door has just given birth to a puppy                 | The <i>man</i> next door has just given birth to a baby       |
| 4. <i>Dog</i> is mammal                                                     | <i>Man</i> is mammal                                          |

|                                                                                             |                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5. The <i>dog</i> is a mammal, i.e. it can give birth to live young which it <i>suckles</i> | <i>Man</i> is mammal, i.e. he can give birth to live young which he <i>suckles</i> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

(adopted from Graddol and Swann, 1993:105).

It has thus been observed by some researchers that generic terms are not really generic in the sense of standing effectively for others in the same class, by its assumed quality of possessing all the features of the entire class. Semanticists, prominent among who is Geoffrey Leech (1968) helped popularize linguistically empty space in their illustrations, so that descriptions below are taken for granted in semantic analysis:

|            |              |            |             |
|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| <i>man</i> | <i>woman</i> | <i>boy</i> | <i>girl</i> |
| +male      | -male        | +male      | -male       |
| +adult     | +adult       | -adult     | -adult      |
| +human     | +human       | +human     | +human      |

By a critical examination of Leech's (1969) works on semantics, Julia Stanley (1975) points to this plus-male versus minus-male dichotomy as evidence that most of the semantic space in language is occupied by males. The writer posits what she calls the theory of negative semantic space for women, pointing out that most spaces that exist in English for males are negative spaces.

In a research conducted by Martyna (1978), it was observed that when male students used he/man in their speech, they thought of themselves alone. Conversely, the females in Martyna's study said they did not think of themselves when they used these same words. According to Martyna, it might well be that males generated sex-specific use of the two terms based on male imagery, whereas females generated truly generic he/man based on grammatical standards of correctness. Martyna's later documents (see Martyna, 1983) revealed the confrontational manner in which the Linguistics faculty of Harvard University, in 1971, criticized a theology class in an attempt of the latter to eradicate a sexist language from its discussions. The faulty magazine at Harvard challenged the theology class as follows:

The fact that the masculine is the unmarked gender in English... is simply a feature of grammar. It is unlikely to be an impediment of change in the patterns of the sexual division of labour towards which our society may wish to evolve (Martyna, 1983, quoted in Talbot, 1998:227).

## 5. Gender Markedness in Igbo

In the Igbo language, the methods of marking gender with regards to masculine, feminine, and neuter have already been examined elsewhere (see Chukwukere, 2004). What is yet to be discussed are the ways that language maintains

impertinent markings, seen as discriminatory to either of the sexes as the case may be.

Words that are used to refer to the male and female in Igbo language have been observed to differ in their range of applications. Men are described as general categories whereas women are described as specific categories, or on the basis of their relationship to men. This characteristic feature of the language, referred to here as gender markedness, is observed even in those lexical forms that people generally think are neutral. A preliminary example is the otherwise neutral [o-] prefix in the noun phrase below:

- |     |                             |                          |
|-----|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 16. | <i>okaikpe ukwu</i>         | (judge)                  |
| (a) | <i>*nwoke okaikpe ukwu</i>  | (male judge) used rarely |
| (b) | <i>*okaikpe ukwu nwoke</i>  | (male judge)             |
| (c) | <i>okaikpe ukwu nwaanyi</i> | (female judge)           |

In the views of Lyle Campbell (1998), this type of gender markedness is predominant in gatekeeping positions, or areas referred to by Joyce Penfield (1987) as “male-identified”. These are positions traditionally dominated by men. We thus notice the persistent use of terms such as the following in the Igbo language:

- |     |                             |                           |
|-----|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 17. | <i>okwo ugboala</i>         | (driver)                  |
| (a) | <i>*nwoke okwo ugboala</i>  | (male driver) used rarely |
| (b) | <i>nwaanyi okwo ugboala</i> | (female driver)           |

Rarely does one come across the phrase: *nwoke okwo ugboala* (male driver) as a term of reference in its own right, except in a need for emphasis.

### 5.1 Marked Masculine Forms in Igbo

Masculine forms are marked when otherwise stigmatized, derogatory positions, usually associated with the female, are associated with a male, as in the following examples:

- |     |                                  |                                       |
|-----|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 18. | <i>ashawo</i>                    | (prostitute)                          |
| (a) | <i>ashawo nwoke</i>              | (male prostitute)                     |
| (b) | <i>*ashawo nwaanyi</i>           | (female prostitute) used for emphasis |
| 19. | <i>akwuna</i>                    | (prostitute)                          |
| (a) | <i>*nwoke akwuna</i>             | (male prostitute)                     |
| (b) | <i>nwaanyi akwuna</i>            | (female prostitute) used for emphasis |
| 20. | <i>ekpe / mkpe</i>               | (widow, a state of widowhood)         |
| (a) | <i>oke ekpe / nwoke isi mkpe</i> | (male widow)                          |
| (b) | <i>nwaanyi isi mkpe</i>          | (female widow) for emphasis           |

- 
21. *okporo / ikporo* (unmarried female)  
 (a) *okeokporo / okokporo* (unmarried male)  
 (b) *\*nwaanyi okporo / nwunye ikporo* (\*unmarried female-female)

As observed from our examples about the marked masculine forms above, the assignment of gender markings may follow certain sex-assigned roles in culture and social life. Such may also be said about the linguistic assignment of gender roles to certain diseases, as well as the Igbo class systems in the examples that follow:

### 5.2 Markedness in Ill-Health

22. *ibi* (hernia / swelling of the scrotum)  
 23. *ibi ara* (swelling of the breast)
24. *ohie / ehie* (uterine fibroid)  
 25. *oke ohie / oke ehie* (“masculine uterine fibroid”, recalcitrant or malignant uterine fibroid)
26. *nshi / nsi* (poison)  
 27. *nshi nwaanyi* (“female poison”, gonorrhea and other sexually transmitted diseases)

### 5.3 Markedness in Social Class

Under this term, two types of social class come to mind namely, the marginalized and the prestigious (the latter is otherwise known here as the honorifics).

#### 5.3.1 The Marginalized Class

The use of the marginalized class system in Igbo society, e.g. *osu*, *ohu*, *odibo* to qualify people, does exhibit features of gender markings, such as when a class term may be unmarked for the male but marked for the female, as follows:

Used generally for the male marked for the female rarely used for the male:

- |     |                           |                                                 |                                      |
|-----|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 28. | <i>ohu</i><br>(slave)     | <i>ohu nwaanyi nwaanyi ou</i><br>(female slave) | <i>nwoke ohu</i><br>(male slave)     |
| 29. | <i>osu</i><br>(outcast)   | <i>nwaanyi osu</i><br>(female outcast)          | <i>nwoke osu</i><br>(male outcast)   |
| 30. | <i>odibo</i><br>(servant) | <i>nwaanyi odibo</i><br>(female servant)        | <i>nwoke odibo</i><br>(male servant) |

#### 5.3.2 The Honorifics

An honorific as used here refers to a term of address to a person on the basis of certain significant attributes and roles, perceived as distinguishing status among a

network of other attributes and roles shared by the rest of the members of the society. A title as a distinguishing feature of Igbo class system observes the principles of gender markedness as illustrated below:

### 5.3.2.1 Male Honorifics as Unmarked Category

31. *Nze*: a titular for a male dignitary
32. *Ozo*: a titular for a male dignitary
33. *Ichie*: “ “
34. *Eze*: paramount ruler of a community or race
35. *Maazi*: a male honorific equivalent to the English “Mr.” (e.g. *Maazi Okoro*: Mr. Okoro)

### 5.3.2.2 Female Honorifics as Marked Category

36. *Ugoeze*: a popular title for the wife of the Eze-paramount ruler
37. *Eze nwaanyi*: \*female paramount ruler
38. *Nwunye eze*: wife of the Eze-paramount ruler
39. *Loolo nze*: wife of Nze-male dignitary

As seen from the above examples of female honorific titles, none of these traditional titles, which are widespread among the Igbo of today, may be taken or adopted by a woman who is not “wife of”, unlike the male honorifics that qualify them on their own basis. As these examples suggest, the processes of naming in ill-health, social class, and indeed gender and markedness, are part and parcel of the socio-cultural and historic development of Igbo as a linguistic community.

## 6. Conclusion

Markedness has been described as a set of binary oppositions between abstract classificatory features and their relevance to language and thinking. Our paper has surveyed the state of research so far, on issues surrounding the assignment of markedness to gender properties of the word. By examining the background of markedness in linguistics, we note in this paper that the meaning of markedness has not remained constant among researchers, and at different ages. One thing similar however, is that researchers are agreed that the unmarked term is neutral while the marked term exhibits constraining characteristics. Citing examples of gender markedness in English and Igbo, this paper notes that most semantic spaces in language appears to be occupied by the males as gatekeepers and the prestigious. There are however, instances where a semantic space occupied by the male may not be as prestigious, such as in the assignment of the role of one of the socially marginalized, as in examples 28, 29, and 30. Our paper urges a revisiting of issues erstwhile taken for granted in semantic theory; markedness and binary oppositions may not after all be an intrinsic part of human brain development, as posited in earlier works, but may be an incident of social forces well apart from nature.

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# 51. The Semantics & Morphosyntax of the $\mathfrak{R}$ -relation in Yorùbá Genitive Constructions

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This paper examines the semantics and morpho-syntax of the  $\mathfrak{R}$ -relations found in Yorùbá genitive constructions, claiming that such a relation can be pragmatically determined (via discourse-linking), lexically determined via the inherent meaning of relational nouns or as inalienable body-part nouns. It establishes that in Yorùbá, it is possible to have a genitive relation without possession; but, conversely, all cases of nominal possession show some kind of genitive relation. It proposes a small clause vP as the base structure from which all the attested genitive constructions in the language can be derived.

## 1. Introduction

The notion of  $\mathfrak{R}$ -relation is to express ways by which lexical entities enter into relations with one another in the grammar of a language. This relation can take place in semantics or syntax. The entities in such a relation can be a verb and a noun; two nouns etc. The focus of this paper is to discuss the semantics and morphosyntax of  $\mathfrak{R}$ -relation of nominal expressions in Yorùbá genitive constructions as shown by the example in (1). I start by defining the terms that I frequently use in the paper in §1.1 and §1.2.

### 1.1 “Possessive” versus “Genitive”

Attempts have been made to draw a distinction between “possessive” and “genitive” construction in the literature. For example, in semantics (Borer 2004), this kind of phrase is referred to as possessive because the focus is on meaning. Once possessive is mentioned, semantic consideration necessarily comes in, whereas “genitive” denotes a morphosyntactic (not semantic) relationship between a nominal and some other item, which may not necessarily be a nominal.<sup>1</sup> The terms “genitive” and “possessive” as used in this paper therefore refer to constructions where two simple nouns enter into some relation with one another either at the semantic or syntactic level (Storto 2003).

Following from above, I conclude that the terms “genitive” and “possessive” are different names for the same kind of nominal expression.<sup>2</sup>

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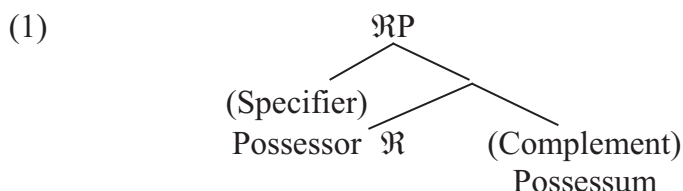
<sup>1</sup>There is even a trend to decompose possession syntactically into location, BE and HAVE. See Benveniste (1971); Freeze (1992); Harley (1995); Partee and Borschev (2002)

<sup>2</sup> Following standard practice, I analyze genitive in terms of Case (Lindauer 1998).

## 1.2 Possessor and Possessum

The other two terms that I use very often are Possessor and Possessum. Following from the established fact in §1.1, a possessum NP does not necessarily mean an item possessed by X. Neither is it the case that a possessor NP always refers to the one who possesses X. Rather, the two simply represent the two arguments that are in some semantic or syntactic relation.

In the small clause, which I propose as the base structure (contra Ajíbóyè 2005), the  $\mathfrak{R}$  heads the phrase and projects to  $\mathfrak{RP}$ . The Possessor occupies the Specifier position whereas the Possessum is in the complement position.



I claim that this Possessor-Possessum structure is the base of all genitive constructions in Yorùbá. Any deviation from this linear order in the surface syntax is accounted for via raising.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. §2 and §3 discuss the semantics of  $\mathfrak{R}$ -relation in nominal and verbal domains respectively. In §4, I give a morphosyntactic account of the  $\mathfrak{R}$ -relation in those environments and conclude in §5.

## 2. Two kinds of $\mathfrak{R}$ -relation in nominal domain

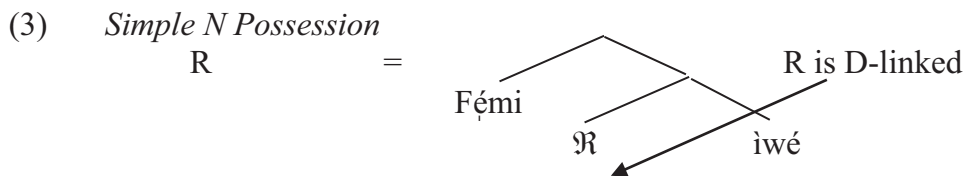
Nouns enter into a relation with each other in one of two ways: as pragmatically determined via discourse-linking or as lexically determined via the inherent meaning of relational nouns or as inalienable body-part nouns. I try to establish that the inherent meaning of the possessum determines the kind of relation that holds between it (possessum), and the possessor.

### 2.1 Discourse-linked $\mathfrak{R}$ -relations

First is the kind of  $\mathfrak{R}$ -relation that is Discourse-linked. This relation is pragmatically determined. According to Higginbotham (1983), an example such as (2a) is interpreted as in (2b).

- (2) a.      ìwé    e      Fẹ̀mì  
               book MT<sub>μ</sub> F.  
               'Femi's book'
- b.       $\exists x [\text{ìwé}(x) \wedge R(T, x)]$   
               = there exists x, x is a book and x stands in some relation R to Femi

The R relation has its value supplied by discourse. This is the sense in which it is said to be Discourse linked (D-linked).



To say that the  $\mathfrak{R}$ -relation is D-linked therefore means that a genitive phrase needs a proper discourse setting before an accurate reading can be obtained. Thus the example in (2): *ìwé e Fẹmi* ‘Femi’s cutlass’ needs a discourse context for the relation to be understood. For example, depending on the context, the book in question could be as given in 4.

- (4)
- a. the book that Femi read
  - b. the book that Femi drew a picture of
  - c. the book that Femi sang a song about
  - d. the book that Femi owns
  - e. the book that Femi threw into the river when he was fishing

According to Ajíbóyè (2005), the discourse-linked otherwise known as pragmatically determined R relation genitive constructions fall into three subtypes: genitives of possession, of depiction and of modification.

### 2.1.1 Genitive of possession

While the genitive of possession in (5) corresponds to the semantic notion of possession,

- (5)
- a. *ilé e Fẹmi* *genitive of possession*  
house MT<sub>μ</sub> F.  
‘Femi’s house’
  - b. *owó o Bùnmi*  
money MT<sub>μ</sub> B.  
‘Bunmi’s money’

### 2.1.2 Genitive of Depiction

The genitive of depiction in (6) is ambiguous between possession and depiction.

- 6
- a. *àwòrán an Fẹmi* *genitive of depiction*  
picture MT<sub>μ</sub> F.  
‘Femi’s picture’
  - b. *ère e Sòlàárín*  
statue MT<sub>μ</sub> S.  
‘Solarin’s statue’

### 2.1.3 Genitive of Modification

As for the genitive of modification in, it is never construed as a possessive relation (cf. Partee and Borschev 1999:174). As with any modification, this type of genitive sheds more light to the noun that occupies the position of the possessor NP.

- (7) a. akoni                      òṣèlú  
astute                      politician  
‘an astute politician’
- b. ògbóntagi      oníròyìn                      *genitive of modification*  
gem                      journalist  
‘a gem of a Journalist’

### 2.1.4 Analysis

These three subtypes of genitive construction are all instances of the relation  $\mathfrak{R}$ . I represent that of  $\mathfrak{R}$  relation with genitive of depiction in (8).

- (8) *Simple N Depiction*  
 $\mathfrak{R}$  =

## 2.2 Lexically determined $\mathfrak{R}$ -relations

In addition to these pragmatically determined  $\mathfrak{R}$ -relations, another  $\mathfrak{R}$  relation is found with relational and inalienable nouns.

### 2.2.1 Relational nouns

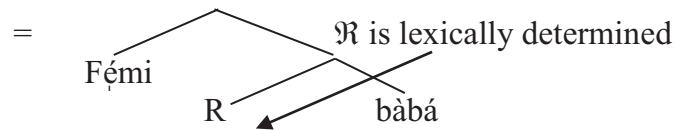
The relational nouns like *bàbá* ‘father’, where the relation is supplied by the meaning of the noun itself. Thus,  $\mathfrak{R}$  is lexically determined.

In (9), under its most salient reading, *bàbá* means ‘someone who stands in the father-of relation’. ‘Femi’s father’ does not need a discourse context for the relation to be understood: the person in question is unambiguously understood to be the one who stands in the father-of relation to Femi (cf. Déchaine 1993: 127).

- (9) a. bàbá a Fẹ̀mì  
father MT<sub>μ</sub> T.  
‘Tunde’s father’
- b.  $\exists x [bàbá(x) \wedge bàbá(x, T)]$   
= There exists x, x is *bàbá* ‘a father’ such that x is the father of Femi

When we say that  $\mathfrak{R}$  is lexically determined, the idea is that for relational nouns such as *bàbá* ‘father’, it is the noun itself that supplies the relation  $\mathfrak{R}$ , as in (10).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>However, discourse linking is also possible with relational nouns in an appropriate context. Imagine the following scenario. “Every member of a community centre’s ‘Father’s Group’ was assigned a counselor. Counselor *Femi*’s father was very enthusiastic about the centre’s program but Counselor *Titi*’s father had

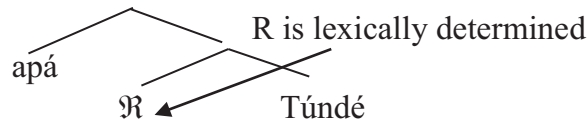
(10) *Relational Nouns***2.2.2 Inalienable nouns**

The other type of lexically determined  $\mathcal{R}$  relation is found with inalienable nouns, which include body-part nouns such as *apá* ‘arm’ (11) (cf. Vergnaud and Zubizarreta 1992; Mühlbauer 2004).

- (11) a.      *apá*    *a*      *Fẹmi*  
              arm    $\text{MT}_{\mu}$    F.  
              ‘Femi’s arm’

- b.       $\exists x [\text{apá}(x) \wedge \text{apá}(x, T)]$   
          = There exists  $x$ ,  $x$  is *apá* ‘an arm’ such that  $x$  is the arm of Femi

Such inalienable nouns have a special part-of relation (Déchaine 1993: 127-133; Mühlbauer 2004a,b; 2005; Partee and Borschev 1999). Observe that the inalienable  $\mathcal{R}$  relation is not discourse linked. Thus, as with relational nouns, the inalienable  $\mathcal{R}$  relation is also lexically determined as in (12). In *apá a Fẹmi* ‘Femi’s arm’, this means the arm that is a part of Femi. It is a component of his body, under its most salient reading.<sup>4</sup>

(12) *Inalienable Nouns*

Another case to consider is shown in (13). In (13a), both nouns are animate. In that case *Fẹmi* does not possess his boss, but instead the genitive simply allows for the satisfaction of the  $\mathcal{R}$  relation, since if you are a boss, you must be somebody’s boss. Further, there are cases like (13b) where *apá* ‘arm’ contextually means ‘sleeve’; metaphorically the gown can be thought to possess the sleeve just as I possess my own arm via the part-whole relation (cf. Mühlbauer 2004; Partee and Borschev 1999).

- (13) a.      [*ògá*    *a*      *Fẹmi*]  
              master  $\text{MT}_{\mu}$    F.  
              ‘Femi’s master’
- b.      [*apá*    (*a*)      *agbádá*]  
              arm    $\text{MT}_{\mu}$    garment  
              ‘a garment’s sleeve’

no real interest in the group at all.” In this context, discourse linking would take precedence over the kinship interpretation. However, such “forced contexts” are not considered here.

<sup>4</sup> See Burton (1995) for a discussion of the less salient readings of inalienable nouns.



The simple N possession has an open semantic relation R whose content is provided by the context (i.e. pragmatically determined). For the other two types of genitives, namely relational nouns and inalienable body part nouns, the R relation is lexically determined.

To summarize, in Yorùbá, it is possible to have a genitive relation without possession. Conversely, all cases of nominal possession show some kind of genitive relation. In (14a), *àpò* ‘a bag’ cannot be possessed by *bàtà* ‘shoes’ in any obvious way, although the shoes stand in a relation to the bag, e.g. by occupying the bag in spatial terms. But even though possession as such is not found in (14a) it is no less genitive than (14b) which can have a clearly possessive construal along the lines of ‘the money that Femi has’.

- (14) a. [àpò o bàtà]  
           bag MT<sub>μ</sub> shoe  
           ‘a bag of shoes’
- b. [owó o Fẹ̀mì]  
           Money MT<sub>μ</sub> F.  
           ‘Femi’s money’

Based on (14), the conclusion must be that the notion of possession comes slightly different from that of genitive.

### 3. $\mathfrak{R}$ -relation in verbal domain

Observe that just as the nominal R relation is compatible with a wide range of pragmatically conditioned interpretations, as in (15a), so too is the verbal R relation, as in (15b).

- (15) a. nominal  $\mathfrak{R}$ -relation (possessor/genitive)  
           ìwé e Túndé  
           book MT<sub>μ</sub> T.  
           (i) ‘the book that Tunde owns’  
           (ii) ‘the book that Tunde wrote’  
           (iii) ‘the book about Tunde’
- b. verbal  $\mathfrak{R}$ -relation (possessor/genitive)  
           Túndé ní ìwé  
           T. have book  
           (i) ‘Tunde owns a book’  
           (ii) ‘Tunde wrote a book’  
           (iii) ‘Someone wrote a book about Tunde’

Furthermore, just as lexical properties of nouns determine the *R*-relation, so too do lexical properties of arguments determine the relation expressed by a light verb.<sup>5</sup> For example, in (16a) the *R*-relation is pragmatically determined by discourse-linking while in (16b-c) the *R*-relation is determined by the lexical properties of the relation and inalienable noun respectively.

- (16) a.     **bàtà**   a       Bùnmi                   *discourse-linking*  
           shoe   MT<sub>μ</sub>   B.  
           ‘Bunmi’s shoes’
- b.     **ègbón** ọ̀n       Bùnmi                   *relational*  
           elder   MT<sub>μ</sub>   B.  
           ‘Bunmi’s brother’
- c.     **apá**    a       Bùnmi                   *inalienable*  
           arm    MT<sub>μ</sub>   B.  
           ‘Bunmi’s arm’

Similarly, in (17) it is the inherent lexical properties of the object argument that determine how light verb *jẹ* ‘eat, ingest’ is interpreted. In (17a), *jẹ is*  $\square$  *u* translates to ‘eat yam’; in (17b) *jẹ gbèsè* translates literally as ‘eat debt’, i.e. to be in debt; in (17c) *jẹ egba* ‘eat cane’ translates as ‘to be caned’. Thus, just as the co-argument relation between [ARG1 v ARG2] is determined by the lexical properties of [ARG2] in the Possessive/genitive constructions of (17), so too is the co-argument relation between [ARG1 *jẹ* ARG2] determined by the lexical properties of [ARG2] in (15).

- (17)       Bólá   jẹ       **ìṣu**  
           B.    eat     yam  
           ‘Bolu ate yams.’
- b.     Bólú   jẹ       **gbèsè**                   *experiencer-theme*  
           B.    eat     debt  
           ‘Bolu is in debt.’
- c.     Bólú   jẹ       **ẹgba**                   *experiencer-theme*  
           B.    eat     cane  
           ‘Bolu received some strokes of cane.’

What is reported of the genitive and possessive parallels the case of nominative Case and the external theta-role of the verb. While many arguments with nominative Case are also agents, and many agents bear nominative Case, the correlation is not on one-to-one basis. For example, in (18a), *Rolake* is agent, in

<sup>5</sup>I define light verbs as verbs whose meaning and valence are determined exclusively by nouns with which they combine.

(18b) the same *Rolake* is the experiencer, whereas in (18c) *Rolake* is the possessor. In all three examples, *Rolake* is assigned Nominative Case.

- (18) a. Róláké jẹ àkàrà  
 R. eat bean cake  
 ‘Rolake ate the bean cake’  
 θ: Agent  
 Case: Nominative
- b. Róláké fẹràn àkàrà  
 R. likes bean cake  
 ‘Rolake likes bean cakes.’  
 θ: Experiencer  
 Case: Nominative
- c. Róláké ní àkàrà  
 R. have bean cake  
 ‘Rolake has a bean cake.’  
 θ: Possessor  
 Case: Nominative

Delsing (1998: 93-94) observes that though “the relation between possessor and possessum is semantically different from the relation between the subject and the verb, it seems to be morphosyntactically the same relation.” On that view, genitive is defined in terms of structural Case.

#### 4 The morphosyntactic realization of the *R*-relation in Yorùbá

The overt realization of the *R*-relation elements found in Yorùbá is morphosyntactically conditioned. To this end, In Ajíbóyè (2005), it is observed that there are three kinds of genitive constructions in Yorùbá:

- (19) a. Nominal genitive  
 b. Nominal plus *ti* construction  
 c. Verbal genitive

The examples in (20) illustrate these three types. In (20a) the possessum and the possessor are separated by a mid tone mora ( $\mu$ ) herein referred to as the genitive marker (henceforth mid tone mora ( $MT\mu$ )). Similarly, the example in (20b) parallels the example in (20a) in the sense that the possessum and the possessor are also separated by mid tone element: *ti*, (20b). The example in (20c) is the sentential counterpart of (20a). This is a kind of possessive, which is assigned by the verb *ní* ‘have’.

- (20) a. *Nominal genitive*  
 ilé e Bùnmi *possessum MTμ possessor*  
 house  $MT\mu$  B.  
 ‘Bunmi’s house’

- 
- b. *Nominal plus ti construction*  
 ẹran ti Bùnmi                      *possessum*    *C*           *possessor*  
 animal of    B.  
 ‘Bùnmi’s animal’
- c. *Verbal genitive*  
 Bùnmi ní iwé                      *possessor*    *verb*    *possessum*  
 B.    have book  
 ‘Bunmi has a book.’

In nominal genitives (20a), the  $\mathcal{R}$ -relation is pronounced as D, which is a copy of the final vowel of the possessum. In nominal plus *ti* constructions (20b), the  $\mathcal{R}$ -relation is pronounced as *ti*. Finally, in verbal genitives (20c), the  $\mathcal{R}$ -relation is pronounced as the possessive verb *ní*. I show the derivation process in (21).

Assuming a small clause “ $\mathcal{RP}$ ” as the base structure for all kinds of Yorùbá genitive constructions, I claim that a Yorùbá nominal construction has the surface structure of a DP where the D takes the small clause as its complement. The possessum, which is a complement of the small “ $\mathcal{R}$ ” moves to the Specifier position of DP to derive the surface linear order of ‘Possessum-Possessor’. I illustrate this in (21a). As for the nominal plus *ti* construction, I also propose a DP structure, but this time the D takes a CP as its complement and the C of the CP in turn takes the small clause as its complement. Starting from the same complement position, the possessum moves to the Specifier position of the CP. I illustrate this in (21b). Finally, for the verbal genitive, I claim that they are base generated in the small clause, thus retaining the Possessor-Possessum linear order, (21c).

- (21)a. [DP <sub>POSS’M</sub> iwé [D e [  $\mathcal{RP}$  <sub>POSS’R</sub> Bùnmi [  $\mathcal{R}$  Ø ] ti ]
- b. [DP                      [D Ø [CP <sub>POSS’M</sub> ẹran [C ti] [  $\mathcal{RP}$  <sub>POSS’R</sub> Bùnmi [  $\mathcal{R}$  Ø ] ti ]
- c. [  $\mathcal{RP}$  <sub>POSS’R</sub> Bùnmi [  $\mathcal{R}$  ní ] <sub>POSS’M</sub> iwé ]

The motivation for the  $\mathcal{RP}$  is to cover the generalizations that hold of the data set involving both nominal and verbal genitives. While the genitive morpheme is pronounced as *ni* in  $\mathcal{R}$  in verbal domain; it is either pronounced as a mid tond mora in D or a mid toned *ti* or both in nominal domain.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper has briefly examined the semantics and morpho-syntax of the  $\mathcal{R}$ -relations found in Yorùbá genitive constructions, claiming that such a relation can be pragmatically determined (via discourse-linking), lexically determined via the inherent meaning of relational nouns or as inalienable body-part nouns. In particular, it establishes that in Yorùbá, it is possible to have a genitive relation

without possession; but, conversely, all cases of nominal possession show some kind of genitive relation.

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## 52. Diagnostics for Distinguishing between SVO & SOV Languages: Evidence from English & Bàtɔ̀nū\*

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For most languages of the world with **fixed** word order, the concept of **word order** still remains one of the unique linguistic features with which such languages are classified into different types. In other words, the concept is considered by linguists to be one of the linguistic universals (Greenberg (1966, 1968), Bach (1974), Blake (1994), Carnie (2002), etc.). Given Blake's (1994) proposed syntactic diagnostics for distinguishing between SVO and SOV languages, this paper considers English and Bàtɔ̀nū as '**mirror images**' in their manifestation of the diagnostics. Thus, empirical data are provided from the two languages to show and describe the manifestation of the typological characteristics that make them structurally **opposite**. The paper also highlights some pedagogical implications of the contrast between the two languages for Bàtɔ̀nū native speakers learning English as a second language. The theoretical framework adopted for our analysis in this work is the 'Principles and Parameters' theory initiated by Chomsky (1981) and developed in other subsequent relevant works.

### 1. Introduction

The dominant surface order of grammatical constituents in a simple declarative sentence, with no special focus or topicalization features, is referred to in the linguistic literature as the 'basic word order' in a given language. A great deal of attention has been paid to the way in which languages vary the order of those grammatical constituents in a sentence, as part of typological studies. Thus, word order is considered to be a more satisfactory way of classifying languages than the older morphological method (which recognized such types as **isolating** and **inflecting**) into which many languages do not fit neatly (see Crystal (1997:8)).

In comparing word orders across languages, it is important to note that what is being compared is the 'basic' or 'favourite' pattern (i.e.; the natural, usual, unmarked order) found in each language. This sequential arrangement of words in a simple declarative sentence is considered by linguists to be one of the linguistic universals. For instance, Greenberg (1968:138) describes synchronic linguistic universals as the types of linguistic statement that can be made that will hold true for all languages, when we compare the results of synchronic descriptions. It is on this note that this paper presents empirical evidence from English (an SVO language) and Bàtɔ̀nū (an SOV language) to validate Blake's (1994:99-100) proposed syntactic diagnostics outlined in (1) below. Unlike free word order languages like Latin, the basic word orders in these two languages are relatively **fixed**.

Our choice of English for comparison with Bàtɔ̀nū is not only because English is an SVO language, but because of its status as an official language that is required to be acquired by every Nigerian child; and also because of its



communicative function in Nigeria as a lingua franca that is spoken in every part of the country.

Given the current thinking in Universal Grammar (UG) and the issue of ‘learnability’, it is assumed that the structural differences between English and Bàtɔ̀nū, as ‘mirror images’, will generate some pedagogical implications for Bàtɔ̀nū native speakers learning English as a second language.

### **1.1 Introducing the Bàtɔ̀nū Language**

Bàtɔ̀nū is popularly known among the non-native speakers as “Bàribá” or “Bàrùbá”. It is genetically classified as a language of the Gur (Voltaic) subgroup of the Niger-Congo family (Welmers (1952:82), Comrie (1987: 965) and Sanusi (2001)). Bàtɔ̀nū is a noun class language with seven prominent noun classes<sup>1</sup>. Unlike Kiswahili and other Bantu languages, the language uses suffix noun class markers rather than prefix markers. The noun class markers (CM) in the language include -wí, -té, -mɛ, -ní, -yé, -gé and -sí (see Sanusi (2001) and 2002)).

The language is spoken as a first language or mother-tongue in two adjacent countries in West Africa – Nigeria and the Republic of Benin. The major areas in which Bàtɔ̀nū is spoken in Nigeria include Kosubosu, Okuta, Gwanara, Yashikira, Ilesha, Chikanda, all in the Baruten Local Government Area of Kwara State. The Bàtɔ̀nū-speaking areas in the Republic of Benin include Parakou, Nikki, Kandi, Natitingou, etc. The Nikki dialect of Bàtɔ̀nū<sup>2</sup>, which is considered to be the standard form of the language, is used for our analysis in this paper.

On the other hand, English language, being the language with which Bàtɔ̀nū is compared in this paper, needs no general introduction. It is an internationally recognized language with sufficient literature.

## **2. Language Universals and Typological Classification**

While considering the relationship between typological classification of languages and language universals, Malmkjaer (2002:321-2) makes the following remarks:

Some language universals are features present in all or an overwhelming majority of languages. Other universals are implicational: they state that if feature *x* is present in a language, then (it is highly likely that) feature *y* will also be present in that language.

For instance, languages are typologized on the basis of the order in which Subject (S), Object (O), and Verb (V) typically occur in the simple sentence of the language. This is normally referred to as ‘Word Order’ typology. While discussing the most common basic word orders among the languages of the world, Crystal (1997: 98) makes the following observation:

Apart from cases of free word order (e.g. Latin, Quechua, Navajo, Fore), there are six logical possibilities: SVO, SOV, VSO, VOS, OSV, OVS. Of these, over 75% of the world’s languages use SVO (as in English, French, Hausa, Vietnamese) or SOV (as in Japanese, Amharic, Tibetan, Korean).

Greenberg (1966:76) however added the empirical fact that only the first three word orders (i.e., SVO, SOV and VSO) are commonly found among human languages.

It is now commonly accepted that parametric differences between languages are of immense linguistic benefit in defining dimensions along which languages differ (see van Kemenade and Vincent (1997:3). For instance, there is a correlation between the position of the adposition (i.e. whether a language has preposition or postposition) and the order verb-object (VO) or object-verb (OV). In other words, it is claimed that a language with SVO word order like English will attest prepositions, thereby exhibiting prepositional phrases; while a language with SOV word order like Bàṭṭnū will attest postpositions, thereby exhibiting postpositional phrases. It was on the basis of this correlation between word-order typology and linguistic universals that Blake (1994: 99) postulated a set of syntactic diagnostics for distinguishing between SVO and SOV languages. The set of diagnostics is listed in (1) below.

- |     |              |   |              |
|-----|--------------|---|--------------|
| (1) | <b>SVO</b>   | : | <b>SOV</b>   |
| (a) | Verb-initial |   | Verb-final   |
| (b) | Preposition  |   | Postposition |

While making a general comment about the correlation between language universals and typological classification, as shown in (1) above, Blake (1994: 99) states that:

Since the verb is the head of the clause and the adposition the head of the adpositional phrase, this would mean an association of prepositions with verb-initial languages and of postpositions with verb-final languages. Whatever the reason, there is such an association plus a strong association of prepositions with subject-verb-object (SVO) order as in English.

## 2.1 Word Order and Parameter-Setting

As implied in the above quotation from Blake (1994: 99), the contrast between SVO word order languages (like English) and SOV languages (like Bàṭṭnū) is parameterized under the concept of **headedness**, which is popularly referred to in 'Principles and Parameters' theory as 'head parameter'. Thus, by comparing English and Bàṭṭnū, using the diagnostics in (1) above, the value of the Head Parameter in English is 'head first' or 'head-initial', while the value of the parameter in Bàṭṭnū is 'head last' or 'head-final'. In other words, in English, each lexical head precedes its complement while in Bàṭṭnū, each lexical head follows its complement. Therefore, both English and Bàṭṭnū are syntactically considered as 'mirror images' in this respect. The data presented in (2), (3), (4) and (5) below illustrate the contrast between the two languages.

## 2.2 Verb Phrases in English

In English declarative sentences, main verbs occur immediately after the subject NPs and precede the object NPs in transitive sentences. For example, a verb phrase

(VP) consists of a verb, as the head of the phrase, plus the complement as shown within the brackets, in each of the sentences given in (2) below:

- (2) (i) The man [<sub>vp</sub>**likes** his wife.]  
 (ii) He [<sub>vp</sub>**opened** the door.]  
 (iii) John [<sub>vp</sub>**travelled** to Abuja.]  
 (iv) She [<sub>vp</sub>**bought** a book for her husband.]  
 (v) I [<sub>vp</sub>**described** the building.]

### 2.3 Prepositional Phrases in English

As earlier mentioned in (2.0) above, one of the typological characteristics of SVO languages is that they prefer prepositions to postpositions. Thus, being an SVO language, English exhibits prepositional phrases in its clause structure, as shown within the brackets in each of the examples given in (3) below:

- (3) i. He jumped [<sub>pp</sub>**over** the wall.]  
 ii. Plants often grow [<sub>pp</sub>**near** the banks of rivers.]  
 iii. She swept the dust [<sub>pp</sub>**under** the carpet.]  
 iv. The house was built [<sub>pp</sub>**on** the mountain.]  
 v. I went [<sub>pp</sub>**to** the school.]

### 2.4 Verb Phrases in Bàtɔ̀nū.

Unlike English, Bàtɔ̀nū exhibits SOV word order. Consequently, main verbs always occur at the sentence-final position in declarative sentences in the language. Thus, in transitive sentences, direct-object NPs occur immediately after the subject NPs, and such object NPs always precede their main verbs, as exemplified in (4) below.

- (4) i. Wòrú<sub>i</sub> ū<sub>i</sub> [<sub>vp</sub>ním – mɛ **nɔ̀r-ā.**]  
 Woru he water CM drink PAST  
 Agr-S  
 ‘Wòrú drank water’.
- ii. ú [dī ā – ní **dī.**]  
 3sg. food CM eat  
 ‘He ate the food’.
- iii. ná [<sub>vp</sub>dèmúnù-yé **kɛɛrī – mɔ̀.**]  
 1sg. orange CM peel PROG  
 ‘I am peeling the orange’.

- 
- iv. nɛm bàái – wí ū<sub>i</sub> [<sub>vp</sub>tíré – rú **dwū** – ā.]  
 my father CM he book Det. Buy PAST  
 ‘My father bought a book’.
- v. Alimotu<sub>i</sub> ū<sub>i</sub> [<sub>vp</sub>wéké – té **kɔr** – ā.]  
 Alimotu she pot CM break PAST  
 Agr-S  
 ‘Alimotu broke the pot’.

## 2.5 Postpositional Phrases in Bàtɔ̀nū

Greenberg (1966), Blake (1994: 99) and Trask (1993: 212) observed that languages with SOV word order, such as Japanese and Basque, prefer postpositions rather than prepositions. Thus, Bàtɔ̀nū, unlike English, exhibits postpositional phrases in its clause structure as exemplified in (5) below:

- (5) i. Wòrú<sub>i</sub> ū<sub>i</sub> sín – ā [<sub>pp</sub>kità – té **wɔɔ**.]  
 Woru he sit PAST chair CM on  
 Agr-S  
 ‘Wòrú sat on the chair’.
- ii. bìlì – wí u<sub>i</sub> dīā – ní dī [<sub>pp</sub>dìì – té **min.**]  
 child CM he food CM eat room CM inside  
 Agr-S  
 ‘The child ate the food inside the room’.
- iii. nɛm bàái – wí ū<sub>i</sub> wín góbí – yé bèrūw – à [<sub>pp</sub>nɛm bɔɔ – té **sɔ.**]  
 my father CM he his money CM keep PAST my bag CM in  
 ‘My father kept his money in my bag’.
- iv. ná nùú dèmúnù – yé nàsáá [<sub>pp</sub>gbèè – té ndi.]  
 1sg him orange CM bring farm CM from  
 ‘I brought him some oranges from the farm’.
- v. Bàké<sub>i</sub> ū<sub>i</sub> gbèré – ní yīkù – à [<sub>pp</sub>gbàbù – té **sɔ.**]  
 Bake she maize CM cook PAST kitchen CM in  
 Agr-S  
 ‘Bake cooked the maize in the kitchen’.

## 2.6 Fixing a Value for the Head Parameter in English and Bàtɔ̀nū

The order of head and complement is one of the parameters of UG. Therefore, Head Parameter involves fixing a value for the heads of phrases in a given language. In English, as shown in (2) and (3) above, the value of the parameter is “**head first**”, where each lexical head precedes its complement. On the other hand, in Bàtɔ̀nū, the value of the parameter is “**head last**”; where each lexical head follows its complement, as exemplified in (4) and (5) above.

Based on X-bar theory (a sub-theory of GB theory), we can use the schema in (6) and (7) below to illustrate the contrast between English and Bàtɔ̀nū in terms of **headedness**:

(6)  $XP \rightarrow X \text{ Comp.}, \text{ or}$   
 $XP \rightarrow X \text{ YP}$

(7)  $XP \rightarrow \text{Comp. } X, \text{ or}$   
 $XP \rightarrow \text{YP } X.$

(where in both (6) and (7) **X** stands for the lexical head of a phrase and **YP** stands for the complement).

### 3. Implication for Second Language Learning

The diversity of language-structure and its implications for language acquisition can be claimed to have prompted Noam Chomsky to come up with the idea of ‘parameter-setting’, as one of the unique features of UG, as developed within the framework of ‘Principles and Parameters’ theory.

According to Van Kemenade and Vincent (1997:3),

In parameter-setting model of language acquisition and change, the task of the language learner is to decide, on the basis of the evidence in her language environment, how to fill in the values for the various parametric options allowed by UG. Choosing the values for the parameters for any particular language is the main task of language acquisition.

The pedagogical implication of our comparison between the structures of English and those of Bàtɔ̀nū, with specific reference to the issues of ‘word order’ and ‘head parameter’, has to do with the concept of **learnability**. In other words, it is assumed that the ability of a Bàtɔ̀nū native speaker to understand the basic differences between his native language and English, will assist him in fixing the appropriate value for head parameter in learning English as a second language. He may as well learn quite a lot about the structure of his own language as a result of mentally comparing it with English.

### 4. Conclusion

Based on Blake’s (1994) proposed diagnostics for distinguishing between SVO and SOV languages, this paper has described and exemplified the syntactic differences between English and Bàtɔ̀nū, in terms of basic word order and head parameter. The major findings can be summarized as follows:

- (a) Whereas English exhibits SVO as its basic word order, Bàtɔ̀nū exhibits SOV.
- (b) Whereas the value of head parameter among the phrases in English is “**head first**”, the value of the parameter in Bàtɔ̀nū is “**head last**”.
- (c) Whereas English exhibits prepositional phrases, Bàtɔ̀nū exhibits postpositional phrases.

It is assumed that our findings in this research will be of pedagogical importance to Bàtɔ̀nū native speakers learning English as a second language; as well as teachers teaching English to Bàtɔ̀nū native speakers as a second language; most especially in fixing the value for the head parameter in English.

## Notes

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1. Nouns in each of the seven prominent noun classes and their class-markers can be exemplified as follows:

|          |                         |             |
|----------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Class 1: | [bìì – wí]<br>Child CM  | ‘The child’ |
| Class 2: | [tírè – té]<br>Book CM  | ‘The book’  |
| Class 3: | [ním - mɛ ]<br>Water CM | ‘The water’ |
| Class 4: | [bōō – gé]<br>Goat CM   | ‘The goat’  |
| Class 5: | [dɛkā - yé]<br>Goat CM  | ‘The stick’ |
| Class 6: | [gbèré-ní]<br>Maize CM  | ‘The maize’ |
| Class 7: | [yàkà-sí]<br>Grass CM   | ‘The grass’ |

2. Bàtɔ̀nū has not been officially reduced into writing. Published materials in the language are written with the I.P.A. symbols, as in Welmers (1952, 1973).



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## 53. The Pronoun System in Òkó-Ósànyèn

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### 1. Introduction

Òko-Ósànyèn is one of the endangered languages in the world. It is the language that has been given different nomenclatures such as Ògòrí, Ògòrí-Màgógó, Òko by different scholars (Adégbìjà (1993, 2001) Abífarín (1983), Amòrán (1978), Chumbow (1982a,b), Dúrówaiyé (1995), Sàláwù (2005,2006)). The name Òkó-Ósànyèn is adopted in this paper for the language because it reflects the authentic naming of the native speakers of the language. Adégbìjà (2001:288) has this to say:

Along with Magongo, another small village about three kilometres away, the people speak a very unique minority language, known to the native speakers as Òko, to outsider as Ogori but referred to as Osanyin in Magongo. The uniqueness of the Òko, language in the fact that it shares very little with the language of the immediately surrounding neighbours and also because only Ogori and Magongo (with perhaps less than 50,000 speakers in all of Nigeria and most likely all after the world) speak this language, in the Nigerian context the very fact is a potential source of threat.

From Adegbija's comment, one can infer that the language is spoken mainly in two towns: Ògòrí and Màgógó which are situated in Ògòrí-Magongo Local Government which was established in 1996 in Kogi State of Nigeria. Second, one can deduce that it is a different and unique language, not a dialect of any of the prominent neighbouring languages. This has been proved by Sàláwù (2006a). Third, one can easily decipher that the language is endangered by the virtue of the leanness in number and the limited spread of its speakers and because of the limited functional investment in the language.

To the best of our knowledge, not much research work has been done on the linguistic aspect of Òko-Ósànyèn (henceforth OO) in the past until of recent. Few linguistic researches on the language are as follows just to mention a few: Chumbow (1982a&b) Yusuf (1998). This paper is just a contribution to fill the vacuum and also to serve as a catalyst for other academic researches on the linguistic studies on OO. This study sets to have a syntactic description of the pronoun system in OO. It will discuss the types and syntactic functions of the pronouns in the language.

### 2. Òko-Ósànyèn Pronouns

Pronoun is one of the non-lexical, closed and future word-classes in the language. Bamgbose (1967:10) has this additional information on the pronouns:

Pronouns have a system of number (singular and plural) and of person (1st, 2nd and 3rd person). They also have different forms for different syntactic positions.

The pronouns in OO have all these grammatical categories of number, person and case as enumerated in Bamgbose's definition. In this paper, we believe that there are two types of pronouns in OO namely: Long pronouns and short pronouns. Following Awóbùlúyì (1992)'s proposal, we are of the view that the short pronouns are derived from the long counterparts. A systematic study of the morphology of the short plural subject, singular and plural object and qualifier pronouns will be revealing. (1) will just be a brief schematic configuration of the long pronouns and short pronouns in the language.

|                          |  |                 |               |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------|---------------|
| (1)                      |  | <i>Singular</i> | <i>Plural</i> |
| Long pronouns in OO are: |  | Àmẹ             | Àtọ           |
|                          |  | Àwọ             | Ànọ           |
|                          |  | Àyé             | Àbẹ           |
| (b)                      |  | <i>Singular</i> | <i>Plural</i> |
| Short pronouns:          |  | mọ/mú           | tọ/tú         |
|                          |  | wọ/wú           | nọ/nú         |
|                          |  | yẹ/ya           | ba/bá         |

The casual morphological configuration should be roughly put as in (2).

|     |     |    |    |   |     |    |    |
|-----|-----|----|----|---|-----|----|----|
| (2) | àmẹ | -> | mẹ | : | Àtọ | -> | tọ |
|     | àwọ | -> | wọ | : | ànọ | -> | nọ |
|     | àyé | -> | yé | : | àbẹ | -> | bẹ |

The rule guiding the morphological process says something like:

- (3) "Drop the first syllable of the long pronoun to produce its corresponding short object form and keep any surviving segmental and tonal features" In the subsequent sections, we shall explain these long and short pronouns in OO fully.

## 2.1 Short Pronoun Subject

In the subject syntactic position, OO has the following short pronouns in (4).

| (4)                    |                 |       |               |       |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| <i>Person</i>          | <i>Singular</i> |       | <i>Plural</i> |       |
|                        | SET A           | SET B | SET A         | SET B |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> person | ì               | ẹ     | tì            | tẹ    |
| 2nd person             | ù               | ò     | nì            | nẹ    |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> person | ẹ               | à     | bì            | bẹ    |

These short pronoun subjects in OO are monosyllabic. They have the grammatical category of person and number as shown above. Òkò-Ósànyè pronoun system is generally fusional since a single form can be used to indicate person, number and case as the case may be. These short pronoun subjects, like other short pronouns in OO, have two forms because of the interface between the phonology and syntax in the language.

Before we will use these short pronouns in structures, it is very pertinent to have a brief review of some scholars who have worked on some areas of linguistics in OO most especially on the influence of phonological facts on the morphology and syntax of the language. Scholars who had worked on the vowel harmony in the language can be grouped into two. Amòrà (1979), Abífárin (1983) and Pópóolá (1980) believe that vocalic segments such as /i, ĩ, u ũ, a, ǎ/ are neutral vowels in the sense that they can be 'found' in either of the harmonic sets and that only /e, o/ in set A and /ɛ, ɔ/ in set B are mutually exclusive. This view gives both to the vowel harmony chart in (5).

(5a)

| SET A | SET B | SET A | SET B |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| i     | ĩ     | i     |       |
| u     | ũ     | u     |       |
| e     |       | e     | ɛ     |
| o     |       | o     | a     |
| a     | ǎ     |       |       |

Chumbow (1982b) is the second group that has a different view. He believes that vowels /i, u/ are not neutral but they belong only to harmonic set A and that vocalic segment /a/ is an exclusive member of the set B. As a result of this, the harmonic vowel chart in (5b) is generated. This paper subscribes to the Chumbow's view. (See Chumbow (1982a) for more information on the vowel Harmony in OO).

As a mark of the harmony constraint the [+ATR] vowels on the one hand as in SET A and the [-ATR] ones on the other as in Set B do not normally co-occur with each other within a phonological word or at the sentential level.

Hence, all forms of the short pronoun subject in set A in figure (4) co-occur with the following verbs which vowels belonging only to the harmonic vowel Set A in (5b) while those pronouns in Set B in (4) precede only the verbs that contain a series of vocalic segments in Set B in (5b). The examples in (6a-f) are to showcase their co-occurrence.

6a

- |      |                              |       |                   |
|------|------------------------------|-------|-------------------|
| (i)  | ĩ                            | roro  | 'I think/thought' |
|      | 1st person sing. pron. subj. | think |                   |
| (ii) | ẹ                            | yọ    | 'I go/went'       |
|      | 1st pers sing.pron. subj.    | go    |                   |

|      |                             |       |         |  |                            |
|------|-----------------------------|-------|---------|--|----------------------------|
| b(i) | tì                          |       | jéjé    |  | 'We walk/walked'           |
|      | 1st person. Plu.pron. subj. |       | walk    |  |                            |
| (ii) | tè                          | sé    | ahéré   |  | 'We catch/caught fish'     |
|      | 1st plu.pron.subj.          | catch | fish    |  |                            |
| c(i) | ù                           |       | jéjé    |  | 'You walk/walked'          |
|      | 2nd pers.sing..pron.subj.   |       | walk    |  |                            |
| (ii) | ò                           | kpò   | òti     |  | 'You climb/climbed tree'   |
|      | 2nd per. sing.              | climb | tree    |  |                            |
| d(i) | nì                          |       | múne    |  | 'You run/ran'              |
|      | 2nd pers. plu. pron. subj.  |       | run     |  |                            |
| (ii) | nè                          | kpò   | òti     |  | 'You climb/climbed trees'  |
|      | 2nd pers. plu. pronm. subj. | climb | tree    |  |                            |
| e(i) | è                           |       | múne    |  | 'He/she runs/ran'          |
|      | 3rd pers. sing. pron. subj. |       | run     |  |                            |
| (ii) | à                           | yó    | kààràkà |  | 'He/she goes/went quickly' |
|      | 3rd per. sing. pron. subj.  | go    | quickly |  |                            |
| f(i) | bì                          | sú    | úrú     |  | 'They are beautiful'       |
|      | 3rd pers. plu. pron. subj.  | have  | beauty  |  |                            |
| (ii) | bè                          | bàlé  | Èbólá   |  | 'They look/looked at Bólá' |
|      | 3rd per.plu.pron.subj. look | Bólá  |         |  |                            |

At this juncture, we need to debunk the view expressed by Pópóolá (1980:18) that the items: dèkì and dàkè are the inflectional morphemes in Òko-Ósànyèn that indicate the grammatical category of the number as regards the third person singular. First, the language has no inflectional morphemes. Second, looking at the syntactic behaviour of the so-called inflectional morphemes in OO, they can co-occur with nouns or pronouns that are not of third person singular or plural stock as shown in:

|       |                      |          |      |                     |
|-------|----------------------|----------|------|---------------------|
| (7)i. | Nè                   | dàkè     | yó   | 'You go often'      |
|       | 2nd pers. plu. subj. | HAB(Aux) | go   |                     |
| ii.   | Íbísí                | dèkì     | jéjé | 'Íbísí walks often' |
|       | Íbísí                | HAB(Aux) | walk |                     |

Third, both third person singular and plural subject pronouns can function in grammatical constructions without the usage of the so-called inflectional morphemes as indicated in (8) and (6ei&ii).

|     |                            |           |    |                      |
|-----|----------------------------|-----------|----|----------------------|
| (8) | À                          | á         | yó | 'He/she/it is going' |
|     | 3rd per. sing. subj. pron. | PROG(AUX) | go |                      |

The data in the language reveal that dàkè and dèkì are variant habitual aspectual auxiliary verbs.

## 2.2 Short Pronoun Object

OO has the following forms as its short pronouns in the object syntactic position.'

(9)

| Person     | Singular |       | Plural |       |
|------------|----------|-------|--------|-------|
|            | SET A    | SET B | SET A  | SET B |
| 1st person | mú       | mó    | tú     | tó    |
| 2nd person | (w) ú    | (w)ó  | nú     | nó    |
| 3rd person | yú       | Yé/á  | bá     | Bá    |

Like their subject counterparts, they are monosyllabic items and also these object pronouns exhibit allomorphic variations. The morphological rule in (3) applies fully in generating these short object pronouns from the long pronouns. The forms of those pronouns in grammatical constructions depend on the vowels of the verbs that follow them. We shall present data to show the harmonic nature of the pronouns and the verbs in (10).

- a. i. Òkí bùré mú 'Òkí hits/hit me'  
       Òkí hit 1st per. sing. obj pron.  
       ii. Òkí bé mó 'Òkí beat/beats me'  
       Òkí beat 1st per. sing. obj.pron.
- b. i. Òkí bùré wu 'Òkí hits/hit you'  
       Òkí hit 2<sup>nd</sup> per.sing.obj.pron.  
       ii. Òkí gán wó 'Òkí greets/greeted you'  
       Òkí greet 2<sup>nd</sup> per.sing.obj.pron.
- c. i. Òkí bùré yú/á 'Òkí hits/hit it/her/him'  
       Òkí hit 3rd per. sing. obj. pron.
- d. i. Òkí bùré tú 'Òkí hits/hit us'  
       Òkí hit 1st per. plu. obj. pron.  
       ii. Òkí bé tó 'Òkí beats/beat us'  
       Òkí beat 1st per. plu. objn. pron.
- e. i. Òkí bùré nú 'Òkí hits/hit you'  
       Òkí hit 2nd per. plu. obj. pron.  
       ii. Òkí bé nó 'Òkí beats/beat you'  
       Òkí beat 2nd per. plu. obj. pron.
- f. i. Òkí bùré bá 'Òkí hits/hit them'  
       Òkí hit 3rd per. plu. obj. pron.  
       ii. Òkí bé bá 'Òkí beats/beat them'  
       Òkí beat 2nd per. plu. obj. pron.



From these examples, all the forms of the short pronoun objects in set either in singular or plural sections in (9) co-occur with the verbs whose vowels belong to the [+ATR] set A in (5b) while those short pronoun objects in set B operate with the verbs containing the [-ATR] set B vowels in (5b). The only exceptions are found in the items for the third person pronoun objects both in the singular and plural forms. Here, we have the forms 'á' and bá' in (10ci and 10fi) respectively containing [-ATR] vowels operating with verbs possessing [+ATR] vowels.

### 2.3 Short Pronoun Qualifiers

In Òko-Ósànyè, we have some short pronouns that are used as qualifiers. They are monosyllabic like other short pronouns and they also have allomorphic variations as a result of the vowel harmony. They are always placed before the nominal forms to be qualified. (11) displays these pronoun qualifiers in OO while (12) contains their usage in grammatical constructions.

(11)

| <i>Person</i> | <i>Singular</i> |       | <i>Plural</i> |       |
|---------------|-----------------|-------|---------------|-------|
|               | SET A           | SET B | SET A         | SET B |
| 1st person    | mí              | mó    | tí            | té    |
| 2nd person    | nú              | wó    | ní            | né    |
| 3rd person    | yú              | yé    | bí            | Bé    |

- (12)
- |    |     |                                                  |                                  |
|----|-----|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. | i.  | Íbísí gbá mí emumu<br>Íbísí see my book          | 'Íbísí sees/saw my book'         |
|    | ii. | Íbísí gbá mó óré.<br>Íbísí see my friend         | 'Íbisi sees/saw my friend'       |
| b. | i.  | Íbísí gbá tí égbèlè<br>Íbísí see our cutlass     | 'Íbísí sees/saw our cutlass'     |
|    | ii. | Íbísí gbá té èsa<br>Íbísí see our cloth          | 'Íbísí sees/saw our cloth'       |
| c. | i.  | Íbísí gbá wú emumu<br>Íbísí see you(sing.) book  | 'Íbísí sees/saw your book'       |
|    | ii. | Íbísí gbá wó óré<br>Íbísí see you(sing.) friend  | 'Íbísí sees/saw your friend'     |
| d. | i.  | Íbísí gbá ní emumu<br>Íbísí see you(pl.) book    | 'Íbísí sees/saw your books'      |
|    | ii. | Íbísí gbá né ogbena<br>Íbísí see you(pl.) ladder | 'Íbísí sees/saw your ladders'    |
| e. | i.  | Íbísí gbá yú ósúdá<br>Íbísí see his/her elder    | 'Íbísí sees/saw his/her brother' |
|    | ii. | Íbísí gbá yé óré<br>Íbísí see his friend         | 'Íbísí sees/saw his/her friend'  |

---

|    |     |                                            |                                |
|----|-----|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| f. | i.  | Íbísí gbá bí owun<br>Íbísí see their soup  | 'Íbísí sees/saw their soup'    |
|    | ii. | Íbísí gbá bé óré<br>Íbísí see their friend | 'Íbísí sees/saw their friends' |

A discourse on the positional nature of the qualified item and qualifier is very essential at this stage. OO is a head-first language both at the syntactic and morphological levels (Saláwù 2006a:126-130, 161-187). Generally in the language, N-Q (Noun-Qualifier) Sequence is attested to in this case, the qualified item which is the head-word of the sequence is placed before its qualifier. Few examples in OO are presented in (13).

(13)

|      |       |         |     |       |                        |
|------|-------|---------|-----|-------|------------------------|
| i.   | Òkí   | nè(nè)  | Ayò | sú    | 'Òkí that Ayo marries' |
|      | Òkí   | REL     | Ayò | marry |                        |
| ii.  | Úbó   | upupirò |     |       | 'The fifth house'      |
|      | house | fifth   |     |       |                        |
| iii. | Úmú   | ònábé   |     |       | 'That goat'            |
|      | goat  | that    |     |       |                        |
| iv.  | Úwó   | òyànyàn |     |       | 'The red dog'          |
|      | dog   | red     |     |       |                        |

There are some exceptions to this N-Q sequence in the language in two areas. The first area involves any grammatical construction relating with short pronoun qualifiers and their qualified items as in (12a-f). The sequence order is changed to Q-N. Hence, the short pronoun qualifiers are placed before the qualified words. The second aspect concerns any grammatical structure involving human and non-human nominal qualifiers and qualified nominals as presented in (14).

(14)

|      |       |       |                    |
|------|-------|-------|--------------------|
| i.   | Otun  | ódòrè | 'ear's hole'       |
|      | ear   | hole  |                    |
| ii.  | Íkémí | èsa   | 'Ikemi's cloth'    |
|      | Íkémí | cloth |                    |
| iii. | Étàfá | ìwà   | 'Tàfá's behaviour' |
| iv.  | Ówún  | òtélé | 'The soup's pot'   |
|      | soup  | pot   |                    |
| v.   | Èkó   | ógbén | 'A Lagos child'    |
|      | Lagos | child |                    |

This paper subscribes to the Sàlǎwù (2006a)'s reconstruction proposal by looking at the qualifier-qualified patterns in other African languages that are on the language classification sub-phylum of West Benue-Congo with Òko-Ósànyèn such as Ìgbò, Yorùbá, Edó-Bìíní and Èbìrà. In all these related language; the N-Q sequence is generally chosen except few cases of Q-N pattern. The data from these languages are shown in (15).

- (15) a. Ìgbò  
           úlo                  egwo                  'Bank'  
           house              money  
           mwanyin          ge                  'Your wife'  
           wife              your  
           ofe              mmanu          'Oily soup'  
           soup              oil
- b. Èbìrà  
           ìrèhi              àmì                  'my house'  
           house              my  
           ènù              òzòzà          'good yam'  
           yam              good  
           ònòru          épàpà          'The first man'  
           man              first
- c. Yorùbá  
           aso              mi                  'my cloth'  
           cloth              my  
           obìnrin          pupa          'A fair woman'  
           woman          red  
           ilé              owó          'A bank'  
           house          money
- d. Edó  
           àmè              ívìn              'Coconut's water'  
           water          coconut  
           àkàkà          mè              'my grasshopper'  
           grasshopper  my  
           òhà          Èghósà          'Eghósà's wife'  
           wife          Ègbòsà

Looking at these cross-linguistic data, one may suggest that the proto-language of these related languages including Òko-Ósànyèn permitted both the N-Q and Q-N

- Unlike the short counterparts, these long pronouns have no alternative forms. The harmonic constraints on or the tenseness or laxness of the vowel of the verbs do not have any influence on them. The following sentences in (17) - (19) will show their different syntactic positions.

- 
- c. Íyáró àye gbá àwó 'The man see/saw you'  
man the see you(sing)
- d. Bè gbá ànó 'They see/saw you'  
They see you(pl.)
- e. Ní ísúdà bé àyé 'Your brothers beat her/him'  
Your brotherbeat him/her
- f. mó édedá gan àbé 'My father greets/greeted'  
My father greet them
- (19)
- a. àmé èsa àye Ésadé jó 'It is my cloth that Sadé sold'  
my cloth Foc Sadé sell
- b. íyá bé àtó ísúdà 'A mother beats/beat our brothers'  
mother beat our brothers
- c. údùdò bé àwó òtòlé fúwá 'A sheep destroy/destroyed your pot'  
sheep beat your pot destroy

The data in (17) show the long pronouns functioning at the subject position, while those in (18) reveal those at the object syntactic position. The long pronouns in (19) are the qualifiers. They are just like their short counterparts in the case that the Q-N sequence is maintained.

#### 4. Reflexive Pronouns

OO has a set of pronouns that can be termed reflexive (emphatic) pronouns. Like the short and long pronouns, they have the grammatical categories of person and number. This presumes that they have different forms for person and number in the language. They are marked syntactically in OO by suffixing 'íwú' 'body' to the short pronoun qualifiers. The suffixed word 'íwú' is like 'ara' in Yorùbá, 'nwun' in Èbìrà and 'ahun' in Ìgbò. All these different words have the same meaning and referents - 'body' in these languages. These reflexive pronoun have these syntactic features [+pro] and [+anaphor] in OO. They do not have alternative forms like the short pronouns because there is no influence of the harmonic constraints on them and they are like the long pronouns. They are tri-syllabic forms. (20) has the table containing them with their grammatical categories.

(20)

| <i>Person</i>          | <i>Singular</i> | <i>Plural</i> |
|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1st person             | Mí íwú          | tí íwú        |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> person | Wí íwú          | ní íwú        |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> person | yí íwú          | bí íwú        |

These reflexive pronouns are anaphors. They are governed by the principle A of the Binding Theory of the Government and Binding Theory which says that an anaphor is bound in a local domain. Their antecedents must be recoverable within the clauses that contain them. These reflexive pronouns must agree in person and number with their antecedents (subject of a sentence) in any meaningful grammatical constructions. We present these data in (21) to buttress our observation on these reflexive pronouns.

(21)

- |    |                                                       |                    |                              |                          |                                       |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| a. | È <sub>j</sub><br>1 <sup>st</sup> per.pron.subj.sing. | wán<br>kill        | mí<br>my                     | íwú <sub>j</sub><br>body | 'I kill/killed myself'                |
| b. | Tè <sub>i</sub><br>1 <sup>st</sup> per.pron.subj.plu. | wán tí<br>kill our |                              | íwú <sub>i</sub><br>body | 'We kill/killed ourselves'            |
| c. | Ò <sub>j</sub><br>2ndper.pron.subj.sing.              | wán<br>kill        | wí<br>your(sing.)            | íwú <sub>j</sub><br>body | 'You kill/killed yourself'            |
| d. | Nè <sub>j</sub><br>2ndper.pron.subj.plu               | wán<br>kill        | ní<br>your(pl.)              | íwú <sub>j</sub><br>body | 'You kill/killed yourselves'          |
| e. | À <sub>j</sub><br>3rdper.pron.subj.sing.              | wán<br>kill        | yíwú <sub>j</sub><br>his/her |                          | 'He/she kills/killed himself/herself' |
| f. | Bè <sub>j</sub><br>3rdper.pron.subj.plu.              | wán<br>kill        | bí<br>their                  | íwú <sub>j</sub><br>body | 'They kill/killed themselves'         |
| g. | *T <sub>j</sub>                                       | wán                | yí                           | íwú <sub>j</sub>         | *'We kill/killed herself/himself'     |

From the data (21 a-f), can see the co-indexation of the reflexive pronouns and their appropriate short pronoun subjects as a result of the agreement in person and number between them. The sentence in (21g) is ungrammatical because the reflexive pronoun does not agree with the short pronoun subject in person and number.

## 5. Conclusion

This study cannot be said to be exhaustive but our description has been detailed enough to show that there are different type of pronouns in k-sànyè. We have examined the grammatical categories and syntactic functions of the short, long and reflexive pronouns.



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## 54. The Hausa Verb Base and the Selection of Operating Grade

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The bi-morphemic theory of the structure of the Hausa full verb entails that the full verb comprises of verb base (or root or stem), a terminal vowel and a superimposed tone pattern for the entire verb. The terminal vowel and the tone pattern comprise what is called the ‘grade’ of the verb. It has been argued in the literature and especially in Amfani (1996, 2005) that both the verb base and the grade (together with its forms) are bundle of composite features, and a verb base combines with a grade that shares its features to form a full verb. The selection of a grade by a verb base and subsequent merger of same at the lexicon to form a full verb is governed by conditions which allow perfect merger. Seven morphological grades have been identified and each base of a regular verb must operate one or more of the grades in order to form a full verb. Grades 1, 2 and 3 are said to be basic grades with basic meanings. Grades 4, 5, 6 and 7 are derived grades and each has extended meaning built on the basic meaning. Grade 1 is operated by transitive and intransitive verb bases. Grade 2 is operated exclusively by transitive verb bases. Grade 3 is operated by unaccusative verb bases. The present paper discusses the issue of selecting either basic Grade 1 or basic Grade 2 by a transitive verb base. The paper argues that distinction between basic Grade 1 transitive and basic Grade 2 transitive is achieved at LF.

### 1. Introduction

There is no doubt that the most comprehensive and insightful study of the structure of the Hausa verb is F.W. Parsons’ (1960) seminal article titled *The Verbal System in Hausa: Form, Function and Grades*. In this article, Parsons posited that with the exception of few verbs which were considered irregular, the vast majority of Hausa verbs comprise of a base (or stem or root) and a vowel termination. This is the bi-morphemic theory of Hausa verb structure. Since Hausa is tonal and every syllable of a word must carry a tone, every verb in Hausa must have a tone pattern. Parsons points out further that if the tone pattern and the vowel termination of the verb are considered, then seven groups can be identified of distinct terminal vowels and tone pattern. Each group of terminal vowel and tone pattern constitutes what is referred to as ‘grade’ and every verb base must operate one or more grades. Verbs identified as comprising of bases and grades are said to be ‘regular’ verbs in contradistinction with the ‘irregular’ verbs which do not have distinct bases that combine with any of the seven ‘grades’ to form full verbs. In an on-going in-depth study of the structure of the Hausa verb, Amfani (1996, 2005) points out that each of the seven grades of the verb (and therefore,

inevitably the forms of each grade) is a composite of features. Amfani (2005b) and (2006c) are further in-depth studies on the structure and formation of full (regular) verbs in Hausa. The present paper is intended to be a continuation in the study of the Hausa regular verb with a view to gaining more insight into the nature and function of the verb. In particular, the paper addresses the issue of *differential transitivity* posited by the Hausa verb. The background goes as follows. A summary of the Hausa verbal grade system as proposed by Parsons (1960, 1971/72) for disyllabic verbs is as follows:

(1)

| Grade                                         | A-Form    | B-Form    | C-Form         | D-Form    | Meaning             |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|-----------|---------------------|
| <i>Grade 1</i><br>Termination<br>Tone Pattern | -aa<br>HL | -aa<br>HL | -a<br>HL       | -aa<br>HL | Basic meaning       |
| <i>Grade 2</i><br>Termination<br>Tone Pattern | -aa<br>LH | -ee<br>LH | -i<br>LH       | -aa<br>LH | Basic meaning       |
| <i>Grade 3</i><br>Termination<br>Tone Pattern | -a<br>LH  | -         | -              | -         | Basic meaning       |
| <i>Grade 4</i><br>Termination<br>Tone Pattern | -ee<br>HL | -ee<br>HL | -e<br>HL       | -ee<br>HL | Totality extension  |
| <i>Grade 5</i><br>Termination<br>Tone Pattern | -ar<br>HH | -ar<br>HH | -ar (da)<br>HH | -ar<br>HH | Causative extension |
| <i>Grade 6</i><br>Termination<br>Tone Pattern | -oo<br>HH | -oo<br>HH | -oo<br>HH      | -oo<br>HH | Ventive extension   |
| <i>Grade 7</i><br>Termination<br>Tone Pattern | -u<br>LH  | -         | -              | -         | Passive extension   |

(L = Low tone; H = High tone)

A verb base may operate a particular grade in order to form a full verb. Full verbs formed as a result of operating Grades 1, 2 and 3 are said to have *basic meaning*. On the other hand, full verbs formed as a result of operating Grades 4, 5, 6 and 7 are said to have *extended meanings*. An extended meaning is essentially basic meaning plus additional meaning. An extended meaning captures extra meaning which is otherwise not captured by the basic meaning.

Grade 4 represents an extended meaning which captures *totality*. Grade 5 is used to capture an added *causative* meaning. Grade 6 captures the added meaning

(2)    Áudù   yá   á                      sà'yí                      àkúyàà  
             AGR   Tns-asp                      V   2C                      N  
             3MS   NF  
                                                 PERF                      buy                      goat  
(Audu bought a goat)

(3) Áudù yá á sáyóó àkúyàà  
 AGR Tns-asp V 6C N  
 3MS NF  
 PERF buy goat  
 (Audu bought and brought forward a goat)

*Grade 1* is defined as having the following form: *-a/-aa plus HL*, meaning that the vowel termination appears as –a (short) or –aa (long) as the case may be, and takes a High-Low tone pattern in disyllabic verbs. Verb bases operating *Grade 1* are either transitive or intransitive bases and carry the basic meaning of the verb without any extensions.

|     |                      |    |         |              |       |
|-----|----------------------|----|---------|--------------|-------|
| (4) | Áudù                 | yá | á       | qírgà        | kúxíí |
|     | AGR                  |    | Tns-asp | V 1C         | N     |
|     | 3MS                  |    | NF      | (transitive) |       |
|     |                      |    | PERF    | count        | money |
|     | (Audu counted money) |    |         |              |       |

(5) Múúsáá yá á jírǵàà  
AGR Tns-asp V 1A  
3MS NF (intransitive)  
PERF shift  
(Musa shifted)



*Grade 2* is defined as having the following form: *-e/-i/-aa plus LH*, meaning that the vowel termination appears as –e (short) or –i (short) or –aa (long) as the case may be, and takes a Low –High tone pattern in disyllabic verbs. Verb bases operating *Grade 2* are exclusively transitive bases and carry the basic meaning of the verb without any extensions.

- (6)    Àlì    yá                      á                      mààrí                      Áudù  
                  AGR                      Tns-aspl                      V    2C                      N  
                  3MS                      NF                      (transitive)  
                                          PERF                      slap  
                  (Ali slapped Audu)

*Grade 3* is defined as having the following form: *-a (short) plus Low-High*, meaning that the vowel termination appears as –a (short) only and takes a Low-High tone pattern in disyllabic verbs. Verb bases operating *Grade 3* are exclusively unaccusative (i.e. unable to assign an accusative or objective case) and carry the basic meaning of the verb without any extensions.

- (7)    Mángwàrò    yá                      á                      nùùná  
                  N                      AGR                      Tns-aspl                      V    3A  
                  mango                      3MS                      NF                      (unaccusative)  
                                          PERF                      ripe  
                  ((The) mango is ripe)
- (8)    Wátàà                      yá                      á                      ~ùllá  
                  N                      AGR                      Tns-aspl                      V    3A  
                  moon                      3MS                      NF                      (unaccusative)  
                                          PERF                      appear  
                  ((The) moon has appeared)

### 3. Basic Transitive Grades 1 & 2

*Grade 1* is said to be operated by both transitive and intransitive bases. The *Grade 1 A-form*, represented by –aa (long), is operated on the one hand by a intransitive base (9) and on the other hand by a transitive base whose transitivity is exclusively for the accommodation of understood or zero objects (10).

- (9)    Áudù    yá                      á                      jírǵàà  
                  AGR                      Tns-aspl                      V    1A  
                  3MS                      NF                      (intransitive)  
                                          PERF                      shift  
                  (Audu shifted)

- 
- (10)    Áudù   yá                      á                      fásàà                      [ ø ]  
                  AGR                      Tns-asp                      V 1A                      understood object  
                  3MS                      NF                      (transitive)  
                                          PERF                      break  
                  (Audu broke something)

Other forms of Grade 1, i.e. B-form (-aa), C-form (-a) and D-form (-aa) are operated exclusively by transitive verb bases that accommodate pronoun object, noun object and indirect object respectively as shown in (11), (12) and (13) below:

- (11)    Áudù   yá                      á                      fásàà                      [ tá ]  
                  AGR                      Tns-asp                      V 1B                      pronoun object  
                  3MS                      NF                      (transitive)                      it  
                                          PERF                      break  
                  (Audu broke it)

- (12)    Áudù   yá                      á                      fásà                      [ fitílàà ]  
                  AGR                      Tns-asp                      V 1C                      N  
                  3MS                      NF                      (transitive)                      lamp  
                                          PERF                      break  
                  (Audu broke a lamp)

- (13)    Áudù   yá                      á                      fásàà                      [ wà   Láádì ]                      [ fitílàà ]  
                  AGR   Tns-asp                      V 1D indirect object                      direct object  
                  3MS   NF                      (transitive)                      for                      lamp  
                  PERF                      break  
                  (Audu broke a lamp for Ladi)

Grade 2 is said to be operated exclusively by transitive bases as shown in (14), (15) and (16)

- (14)    Àlí    yá                      á                      sàýáá                      [ ø ]  
                  AGR                      Tns-asp                      V 2A                      understood object  
                  3MS                      NF                      (transitive)  
                                          PERF                      buy  
                  (Ali bought (something))

- (15)    Àlí    yá                      á                      sàýéé                      [ shì ]  
                  AGR                      Tns-asp                      V 2B                      pronoun  
                  3MS                      NF                      (transitive)                      it  
                                          PERF                      buy  
                  (Ali bought it)

---

|      |                       |     |        |              |           |
|------|-----------------------|-----|--------|--------------|-----------|
| (16) | Àlì                   | yá  | á      | sàyí         | [ gídáá ] |
|      |                       | AGR | Tns-as | V 2C         | Noun      |
|      |                       | 3MS | NF     | (transitive) | house     |
|      |                       |     | PERF   | buy          |           |
|      | (Ali bought a house ) |     |        |              |           |

#### 4. The Selection of Operating Grade

Practical attempts at making particular regular verb bases to operate all grades (basic and derived) proved abortive and forced the observation that *verb bases are not free floating and therefore are restricted as to what grades they should operate* (Newman (1973)). Thus, a verb base may operate a particular grade and all its forms such as *kaam-* (catch) operating Grade 1 A, B, C & D forms. Consider the following example.

- (17)
- (a) Àlì yá á káámàà [ø]  
           3MS NF V 1A understood object  
                     PERF  
       (Ali caught something known)
- (b) Àlì yá á káámàà [shí]  
           3MS NF V 1B it  
                     PERF pronoun object  
       (Ali caught it)
- (c) Àlì yá á káámà [àkú]  
           3MS NF V 1C parrot  
                     PERF noun object  
       (Ali caught a parrot)
- (d) Àlì yá á káámàà [wà yààráá] [àkú]  
           3MS NF V 1D indirect direct  
                     PERF object object  
       (Ali caught a parrot for (the) children)

A verb base may operate a particular grade and some of its forms but not all of its forms. For example, the verb base *say-* (buy) operates Grade 2 A, B and C forms but not the D-form. Consider the following example.

- (18)
- (a) Bìntà tá á sàyáá [ø]  
           3FS NF V 2A understood object  
                     PERF  
       (Binta bought something known)

- 
- (b)    Bìntà   tá        á        sàyéé        [shì]  
                  3FS   NF     V   2B        it  
                              PERF        pronoun object  
                  (Binta bought it)
- (c)    Bìntà   tá        á        sàýí        [àgóógó]  
                  3FS   NF     V   2C        wrist watch  
                              PERF        noun object  
                  (Binta bought a wrist watch)
- (d)    ?Bìntà   tá        á        sàýáá [wà Láádì]    [àgóógó]  
                  3FS   NF     V   2D indirect    direct  
                              PERF        object        object

Notice that operating Grade 2, D-form by the verb base *say-* produces an unacceptable sentence (18d). To convert (18d) to a fully acceptable sentence, the Hausa native speaker intuitively switches to attaching to the base *say-* a Grade 1D form to produce the full verb *sáyàà*. With *sáyàà*, the sentence becomes

Bìntà   tá        á        sáyàà        [wà Láádì]    [àgóógó]  
                              V   1D

(Binta bought (a) wrist watch for Ladi),

and it is an absolutely well formed sentence. The phenomenon of *grade form switching or substitution* is well known in the literature in respect of some verb bases, and a native Hausa speaker intuitively switches to an acceptable form whenever the need to do so arises.

Essentially, a verb base should operate only one basic grade, i.e. Grade 1, 2 or 3. The logic here is that every verb base is either transitive, intransitive or unaccusative. This characteristic pattern is exhibited by the three basic grades as follows:

(19)

- (a)    Verb bases operating Grade 1 are either transitive or intransitive bases.  
 (b)    Verb bases operating Grade 2 are all transitive bases.  
 (c)    Verb bases operating Grade 3 are unaccusative verb bases.

It is pertinent to note that transitive verb bases operating Grade 1 do not operate Grade 2 and vice versa as shown by the following data.

(20)    Operating Grade 1

| Verb base | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Gloss             |
|-----------|---------|---------|-------------------|
| cuur-     | cúúrà   | *cùùrí  | knead (into ball) |
| qìrg-     | qírgà   | *qìrgí  | count             |
| daf-      | dáfà    | *dàfí   | cook              |

Consider the following examples:

- (21)(a) Bìntà tá á cúúrà dáwòò  
                   3FS NF V 1C N  
                           PERF (transitive) kind of knead food into balls  
 (Binta kneaded *dawoo* into balls)

- (b) \*Bìntà tá á cùùrí dáwòò  
                   3FS NF Vt 2C N  
                           PERF knead kind of knead food

- (22) (a) Áudù yá á qírgà kúxíí  
                   3MS NF Vt 1C N  
                           PERF count money  
 (Audu counted money)

- (b) \*Áudù yá á qìrgí kúxíí  
                   3MS NF Vt 2C N  
                           PERF count money

- (23)(a) Láádi tá á dáfà àbíncí  
                   3FS NF Vt 1C N  
                           PERF cook food  
 (Ladi cooked food)

- (b) \*Láádi tá á dàfí àbíncí  
                   3FS NF Vt 2C N  
                           PERF cook food

(24) Operating Grade 2

| <i>Verb base</i> | <i>Grade 2</i> | <i>Grade 1</i> | <i>Gloss</i> |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| ]aay-            | ]ààyí          | *]ááyà         | tear off     |
| rooq-            | ròòqí          | *róóqà         | beg          |
| maar-            | mààrí          | *máárà         | slap         |

Consider the following examples:

- (25) (a) Mágòòrí yá á ]ààyí [bááyá n ítààcécé]  
                   N 3MS NF Vt 2C NP  
                   Herbalist PERF tear bark of tree  
 ((The) Herbalist tore the bark of (the) tree)

- (b) \*Mágòòrí yá á ]ááyà [bááyá n ítààcécé]  
                   N 3MS NF Vt 1C NP  
                   Herbalist PERF tear bark of tree

---

|          |          |     |      |       |       |
|----------|----------|-----|------|-------|-------|
| (26) (a) | Yààráá   | sú  | ń    | ròò}í | kú]íí |
|          | N        | 3PL | NF   | Vt 2C | N     |
|          | Children |     | PERF | beg   | money |
|          |          |     |      | beg   |       |

((The) children begged (for) money)

|       |          |     |      |       |       |
|-------|----------|-----|------|-------|-------|
| (b) * | Yààráá   | sú  | ń    | róóqà | kúxíí |
|       | N        | 3PL | NF   | Vt 1C | N     |
|       | Children |     | PERF | beg   | money |

|          |     |     |      |       |      |
|----------|-----|-----|------|-------|------|
| (27) (a) | Àlì | yá  | á    | mààrí | Áudù |
|          |     | 3MS | NF   | Vt 2C |      |
|          |     |     | PERF | slap  |      |

(Ali slapped Audu)

|       |     |     |      |       |      |
|-------|-----|-----|------|-------|------|
| (b) * | Àlì | yá  | á    | máárà | Áudù |
|       |     | 3MS | NF   | V 1C  |      |
|       |     |     | PERF | slap  |      |

Why is it that transitive verb bases operating Grade 1 do not operate Grade 2 and vice versa? Several reasons could be adduced.

(28)

- (a) It might not be unconnected with the argument structure of the full verb
- (b) The distinction may be one between true transitive versus pseudo transitive verbs in the language.
- (c) The fact that transitive verb bases in Hausa must operate either basic Grade 1 or basic Grade 2 but not the two together, shows a correlation between tone and meaning. Notice that the feature composition of the grade forms of basic Grade 1 and basic Grade 2 as shown below, is the same and differ only in the feature [Tone].

(29) Table Showing Feature Composition of Grade Forms

| <i>Grade</i>   | <i>A-Form</i>                                     | <i>B-Form</i>                                     | <i>C-Form</i>                                    | <i>D-Form</i>                                         |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Grade 1</i> | aa<br>+HL(H)<br>+Long<br>-Case<br>-Trans<br>-Pron | aa<br>+HL(H)<br>+Long<br>+Case<br>+Trans<br>+Pron | a<br>+HL(L)<br>-Long<br>+Case<br>+Trans<br>-Pron | aa<br>+HL(L)<br>+Long<br>-Case<br>+Trans<br>+Dative   |
| <i>Grade 2</i> | aa<br>+LH(L)<br>+Long<br>-Case<br>+Trans<br>-Pron | ee<br>+(L)LH<br>+Long<br>+Case<br>+Trans<br>+Pron | i<br>+(L)LH<br>-Long<br>+Case<br>+Trans<br>-Pron | aa**<br>+LH(L)<br>+Long<br>-Case<br>+Trans<br>+Dative |



|         |                                                   |                                                   |                                                                      |                                                      |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Grade 3 | -                                                 | -                                                 | a<br>+LH(L)<br>-Long<br>-Case<br>+Unacc<br>-Pron                     | a**<br>+LH(L)<br>-Long<br>-Case<br>+Unacc<br>+Dative |
| Grade 4 | ee<br>+HL(H)<br>+Long<br>-Case<br>-Trans          | ee<br>+HL(H)<br>+Long<br>+Case<br>+Trans<br>+Pron | e<br>+HL(H)<br>-Long<br>+Case<br>+Trans<br>-Pron                     | ee<br>+HL(H)<br>+Long<br>-Case<br>+Trans<br>+Dative  |
| Grade 5 | ar<br>+(H)HH<br>+Long<br>-Case<br>-Trans<br>-Pron | ar<br>+(H)HH<br>+Long<br>+Case<br>+Trans<br>+Pron | ar (da)<br>+(H)HH<br>+Long<br>+Case<br>+Trans<br>-Pron<br>+Sociative | ar<br>+(H)HH<br>+Long<br>-Case<br>+Trans<br>+Dative  |
| Grade 6 | oo<br>+(H)H<br>+Long<br>-Case<br>-Trans           | oo<br>+(H)HH<br>+Long<br>+Case<br>+Trans<br>+Pron | oo<br>+(H)HH<br>+Long<br>+Case<br>+Trans<br>-Pron                    | oo<br>+(H)HH<br>+Long<br>-Case<br>+Trans<br>+Dative  |
| Grade 7 | -                                                 | -                                                 | u<br>+(L)LH<br>-Long<br>-Case<br>+Unacc<br>-Pron                     | u**<br>+(L)LH<br>-Long<br>-Case<br>+Unacc<br>+Dative |

(Trans = transitive; Pron = pronominal; Unacc = unaccusative; the sign \*\* indicates that these forms do not produce acceptable verbs in Hausa.)

Grade 1 has High-Low tone pattern and Grade 2 has Low-High tone pattern in disyllabic verbs. Thus, Hausa arranges all its transitive verb bases in such a way as to operate either Grade 1 or Grade 2. A transitive verb base destined to operate Grade 1 may be forced to operate Grade 2, but the full verb so formed as a result of this *forced merger* must crash at LF for lack of clear meaning as shown by the following examples.

(30)

(a) \*Àlí yá á kàà mí àkúyàà  
V 2C N  
catch goat

---

|     |            |   |                                  |                     |
|-----|------------|---|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| (b) | *Bíntà tá  | á | <i>dàfí</i><br>V 2C<br>cook      | àbíncí<br>N<br>food |
| (c) | *Àlì yá    | á | <i>qìrgí</i><br>V 2C<br>count    | kúxíí<br>N<br>money |
| (d) | *Áudù yá   | á | <i>tùuqí</i><br>V 2C<br>drive    | móótàà<br>N<br>car  |
| (e) | *Múúsáá yá | á | <i>hùurí</i><br>V 2C<br>fan/blow | wútáá<br>N<br>fire  |

Some borderline cases may appear and the intuition of the native Hausa speaker may be put to test as to whether or not it accepts the full verb formed out of the questionable merger at the lexicon. Consider this Grade 1 C-form attached to a verb root *rooq-* ‘beg’ to yield the full verb *róóqà* as in the following sentence:

|      |         |    |   |                      |              |
|------|---------|----|---|----------------------|--------------|
| (31) | ?Yààráá | sú | ń | <i>róóqà</i><br>V 1C | [kúxíí]<br>N |
|------|---------|----|---|----------------------|--------------|

Even though the C-form gives an almost ill-formed structure, the A-form, on the other hand, produces a well-formed structure (30).

|      |        |    |   |                       |                                 |
|------|--------|----|---|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| (32) | Yààráá | sú | ń | <i>ròòqáá</i><br>V 1A | [ ø ]<br>zero/understood object |
|------|--------|----|---|-----------------------|---------------------------------|

((The) children had begged (for something))

There are cases where a verb base seems to be capable of operating both Grades 1 and 2, and if this is correct, it will be a counter to our claim above. However, a closer look at such cases reveals apparent but not real counter examples. Consider the following verb base:

|      |      |
|------|------|
| (33) | ta~~ |
|------|------|

The verb base *ta~~* is realized as *tá~à* (Grade 1) and *tà~í* (Grade 2). But notice that the similarity stops at the phonetic level in which the forms of the two bases for Grade 1 and Grade 2 are phonetically similar, i.e. *ta~~*. The bases are semantically dissimilar. The Grade 1 base *ta~~* means ‘offend someone’ and the Grade 2 base *ta~~* means ‘touch something’. The realization of each of the meanings is achieved through operating a different grade for each of the bases.

Grade 1: tá~à (offend)  
1C

- |      |                                         |     |      |        |         |
|------|-----------------------------------------|-----|------|--------|---------|
| (34) | [ààlibái                                | sú  | ń    | tá~à   | máálàm  |
|      | N                                       | 3PL | NF   | V 1C   | N       |
|      | students                                |     | PERF | offend | teacher |
|      | ((The) students offended (the) teacher) |     |      |        |         |

Grade 2: tà~í (touch)  
2C

- |      |     |     |      |       |             |
|------|-----|-----|------|-------|-------------|
| (35) | Àlì | yá  | á    | tà~í  | móótàr Áudù |
|      |     | 3MS | NF   | V 2C  | NP          |
|      |     |     | PERF | touch | Audu's car  |

(Ali touched Audu's car )

Now consider another verb base:

- (36) taak-

The verb base *taak-* is realized as *táákà* (Grade 1) and *tààkí* (Grade 2). The similarity stops at the phonetic level in which the bases of the two verbs are phonetically similar, i.e. *taak-* for each verb. The bases are however semantically dissimilar. The Grade 1 base *taak-* means 'match on something' and the Grade 2 base *taak-* means 'acquire or achieve success. The realization of each of the meanings is achieved through operating an appropriate grade for each of the bases.

Grade 1: táákà (match on something)  
1C

- |      |                         |     |      |          |           |
|------|-------------------------|-----|------|----------|-----------|
| (37) | Áudù                    | yá  | á    | táákà    | [ kùxíí ] |
|      |                         | 3MS | NF   | V 1C     | N         |
|      |                         |     | PERF | match on | money     |
|      | (Audu matched on money) |     |      |          |           |

Grade 2: tààkí (become)  
2C

- |      |                           |     |      |        |            |
|------|---------------------------|-----|------|--------|------------|
| (38) | Áudù                      | yá  | á    | tààkí  | [ sáá'àà ] |
|      |                           | 3MS | NF   | V 2C   | N          |
|      |                           |     | PERF | become | success    |
|      | (Audu became successful ) |     |      |        |            |

---

The derived Grades (i.e. 4, 5, 6, and 7) have extended meanings added to the basic meanings of the basic grades. Ideally, every verb base can operate any of the derived grades to achieve an extended meaning. When a verb base is unable to operate a particular derived grade, it is because the merger of the verb base and the affected derived grade does not yield a full verb that has a recognized meaning in the language.

## **5. Conclusion**

Two forms of transitive verb bases are available in Hausa, and are distinguished from one another by the grade they operate. Some of these bases operate Grade 1 while others operate Grade 2. The feature [+Tone] distinguishes the two transitive verb bases. It was also pointed out that the distinction might be due to differences in argument structure or the distinction between true and pseudo transitive types. At any rate, there are still issues to be tidied in our effort to understand fully the operation and composition of the Hausa regular verb.

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# 55. The Syntax of Reflexives in Yoruba

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This paper discusses the syntax of reflexives in Yoruba, a member of the new Benue-Congo family (Williamson 1989). Specifically, we examine true reflexives in Yoruba and their positional restriction in grammar. Also, their combinatorial possibility with other categories of Noun Phrase and their occurrence in embedded constructions are observed. The data for this work are taken from the standard Yoruba (SY) which is taught in schools and used in the media.

## 1. Introduction

Reflexive constructions are defined in terms of co-reference of the subject and the object. Givon (1990:628) using the term “true reflexives” says ‘the subject is coreferential with the object, and thus acts upon itself (reflexively). In English, reflexive construction is achieved when the subject acts upon itself. This is exemplified in (1) below:

1.     (a)     He killed himself
- (b)     You know yourself
- (c)     I hurt myself
- (d)     We fined ourselves
- (e)     They know themselves

Reflexivity in (1) above is morphologically marked in himself, yourself, myself, ourselves and themselves. Note, however, that this is not a universal property of reflexivity. In the same vein, reflexivity in Yoruba is marked. However, while (1) above is an instance of reflexives in simple construction in English, we will examine reflexives in Yoruba both in simple and embedded sentences.

### 1.1 Theoretical Perspective

In this paper, syntactic theory will be reviewed in order to arrive at the conceptual framework to be adopted for analysis. Syntactic theory is an attempt to account for tacit knowledge of sentence structure by adult first language speakers. An influential approach to syntactic theory is generative grammar. Like any scientific theory, generative grammar is a provisional collection of hypothesis comprising assumptions and predictions.

An influential theory in this regard is the Government and Binding theory (henceforth GB). The aim of GB (Chomsky, 1981) is to make it possible for languages to be captured with simple few rules unlike the pre-existing theories of syntax. GB is a modular theory in contrast with earlier works in Transformational grammar (from Standard Theory to Revised Extended Standard Theory).



Syntactic complexity results from the interaction of the sub-theories of grammar (Chomsky 1981:5). For example, Bounding theory sets limits on the domain of movement rule. Government theory defines the relationship between the head of a construction and those categories depending upon it. Theta theory deals with assignment and functioning of thematic roles. Binding theory deals with the relationship between grammatical elements such as pronoun, anaphors, R-expression and variables with their antecedents. Case theory deals with assignment of abstract case and its morphological realisation. Control theory determines the potential of reference to the abstract pronominal element referred to as PRO. X-Bar theory constrains the base component of the grammar.

Though X-Bar theory is a central module of GB, the Binding theory will be used to interpret and explain the domain of use of reflexives in Yorùbá.

### 1.1.1 Conceptual Framework

The focus of this paper is the syntactic basis of Yorùbá reflexives. By syntactic, we mean an appraisal or explanation of a true reflexive construction in Yorùbá using syntax as a tool of analysis. The conceptual framework for this analysis is the Binding Theory (BT) of GB.

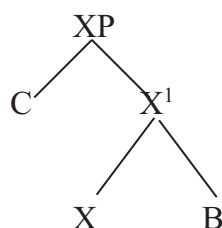
BT attempts to predict the interpretation of different NP-types in different positions in the sentence, as either co-referents (picking out the same referent in discourse) or non-referent (being associated with distinct entities), (Horrocks, 1987:108). Universal grammar allows a limited range of possible NP-types as well as of sentence structures, and this assumption is borne out in the observation that binding works roughly in all languages. However, there are systematic differences among languages in terms of both of the NP-types and of the structures.

NPs generally differ in their power of reference i.e. the ability to point to some contextual entity or individual. The concept of 'binding' is a co-referential relationship between NPs in the sentence. For an NP to be 'bound', it must, in formal terms have the same semantic identity with some aforementioned NPs (Yusuf, 1997:148). According to Haegeman (1991:203), Binding theory is a module of grammar that regulates NP interpretation. It is responsible for assigning an appropriate interpretation to the NPs in sentences. Binding theory is technically defined as:

$\alpha$  binds  $\beta$  if  $\alpha$  c-commands  $\beta$  and is coindexed with  $\beta$   
Cook (1988:157)

c-command and coindexation are necessary conditions under Binding theory. Sells (1985:35) captures Binding in the schema below:

2.



The above schema can be explained in terms of c-command i.e. C c-commands X<sup>1</sup> in the same vein as X c-commands B. However, C can be said to c-command B because the same maximal projection dominating C also dominates B (m-command). Recall that c-command and coindexation are necessary conditions for binding.

Binding has three principles, namely:

A: An anaphor is bound in a local domain

B: A pronominal is free in a local domain

C: A referring expression is free.

However, out of these principles, principle A is relevant to this work though we may make reference to other principles for elucidation. An anaphor is bound in its local domain

Anaphors are phrasal categories that require some aforementioned antecedent NPs. According to Horrocks (1987:109), anaphors are NPs whose referents are necessarily determined sentence-initially and which cannot have independent reference. There are two types:

- (a) Reciprocals
- (b) Reflexives.

## 1.2 Yorùbá Reflexives

Reflexive constructions have been defined in terms of co-reference of the subject and object. As earlier mentioned Givon (Ibid) using the term ‘true reflexives’ says ‘the subject is co-referential with the object, and thus acts upon itself (reflexively). True reflexives in Yorùbá are shown in (3) below:

- 3.      araa mi            ‘myself’
- araa re            ‘himself/herself’
- araa won        ‘themselves’
- araa yin        ‘yourself’
- araa wa        ‘ourselves’

The occurrence of these reflexives in context is shown in (4).

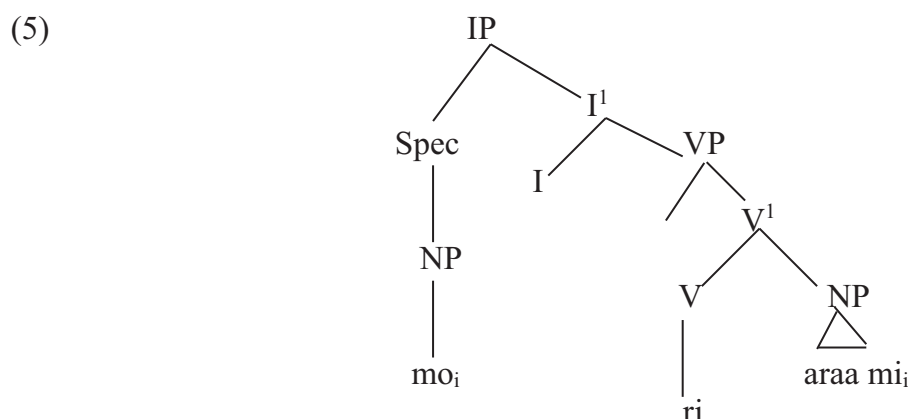
- (4)    (a)    mo    rí    araà mi
- Isg   see   REFL
- ‘I saw myself’
- (b)    A    fèràn   araa   wa
- IPL   like     REFL
- ‘we like ourselves’
- (c)    won   rí   araa   won
- 2PL   see   REFL
- ‘they saw themselves’

- (d) O fèràn araa re  
 3.sg like REFL  
 'He/she likes himself/herself'

The d-structure for (4a) will run thus:

Mo; rí araa mi;  
 I sg see REFL  
 'I saw myself'

In this example, co-reference is indicated by identity of subscript index ( $i = i$ ). This is further explicated on the tree-structure below:



In the same vein, reflexives in (4) share semantic identity with the aforementioned NPs. In this regard, the reflexives and their antecedents are coindexed; these antecedents also c-command their reflexives because they are dominated by the same maximal projection (cf. (5) above).

### 1.2.1 Reflexives in Embedded Sentence

The behaviour of reflexives is not different in embedded sentences. It is observed that reflexives are ruled out in the subject position of an embedded sentence as shown in (6) below:

- 6 (a) \*Mo ni araa mi ri Yemi  
 AGENT say REFL see Yemi  
 I said (that) myself saw Yemi
- (b) \*Won ni araa won mò mí  
 AGENT say REFL know me  
 'They said (that) themselves knew me'.

Sentences in (6) are bad because the reflexives are outside the governing category of the subject of the main clause (MC) with which they are co-referential. However, for (6a) to satisfy grammaticality condition, an NP must be introduced in the subject position of the embedded sentence (i.e. an emphatic form of *mo*, a

pronominal, which is *èmi*), which extends coreferentiality to *mo* in the sentence, hence (7):

- (7)    *mo*        *ni*        *èmi*        *funraa mi rí Yemí*,  
           AGENT say Pro EMPH REFL see Yemí  
           ‘I said (that) I myself saw Yemí’

*èmi* in (7) licenses the existence of *araa mi* in the subject position of the embedded sentence. Other instances include (8):

- 8        (a)    *won*        *ni*                *awon funraa won ló seé*  
                  AGENT say Pro EMPH. REFL foc do it  
                  ‘They said (that) they themselves did it’
- (b)    *O*        *ni oun funraa rè wà ni ibè*  
                  Pro say Pro EMPH. REFL exist at place  
                  ‘He said (that) he himself was there’.

In the same way, it is only strong clitics that can license the occurrence of reflexives in the subject position of a matrix clause. Witness the examples in (9):

- 9        (a)    *Emi funraa mi rí Ade*  
                  Pro EMPH. REFL see Ade  
                  ‘I myself saw Ade’
- (b)    *Awon funraa won mò wón*  
                  Pro EMPH. REFL know them  
                  ‘They themselves know them’.
- (c)    *Oun funraa re ló si ibè*  
                  Pro EMPH. REFL go to place  
                  ‘He himself went to the place’.

### 1.2.2 Reflexives in Focus Construction

Focus refers to an element of information which is added to, rather than superimposed on the pragmatic presupposition (Lambrecht, 1994:206). Stockwell (1977) considers focus as a way of introducing special marking into the surface structure of the element that is being focused. It is the information in the sentence that is assumed by the speaker not to be shared by the interlocutors.

The focus marker in Yorùbá is *ní*. Awobuluyi (1978:96) calls it Introducer. In this work, we observe that reflexives can occur in the subject position of a focus construction without the presence of a licenser (strong clitic). This runs contrary to what obtains in the subject positions of matrix clause and embedded clause. Consider the sentences in (10):

- 10        (a)    *araa mi ni mo ri*  
                  REFL FOC AGENT see  
                  ‘It is myself I saw’.

- 
- (b)    araa   yin   ni   e   n   se  
          REFL   foc   AGENT   ASP   do  
          ‘It is yourself that you are undoing’
- (c)    araa   wa   ni   a   mo  
          REFL   foc   AGENT   know  
          ‘It is ourselves we know’.

Much as (10) runs contrary to our earlier claim, the d-structure of (10a) as shown in (11a) reveals the syntactic process that has taken place:

(11a)   araa mi<sub>I</sub> ni mo ri<sub>ti</sub>

Now consider:

(11b)   mo<sub>I</sub> ri araa mi<sub>I</sub>

A close look at (11) shows that (11a) is derived from (11b) which is the basic sentence. This is achieved through transformation (movement). This explains why the trace (t<sub>I</sub>) in (11a) is coreferential and coindexed with the moved reflexive. The basic sentences in 10 (b & c) are given as (12):

- (12)    (a) E n se araa yin  
             (b) A mo araa wa

Given the analysis above, the logical position of reflexives in (10) still remains the object position of the lexical verb.

### **Conclusion**

Thus far, we have looked into reflexives in Yorùbá: their structural and logical positions as well as their syntactic constraints in grammatical sentences. First, we observe reflexives in both the matrix clause and embedded clause. Reasons why reflexives are bad in subject positions of both clauses are adduced. What is weird in earlier instances is ruled in in focus construction. However, the reason for such occurrence was made explicit (cf 1.2.2).

Reflexives in Yorùbá have not been given serious attention in grammar though they have been discussed in general terms with other grammatical categories. In view of this oversight, it becomes necessary to examine the form and combinatorial possibility and constraint of reflexives with other NPs in a sentence, that which this paper addressed using Binding theory as a tool of analysis.

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## 56. The Limit of Bidirectional Spread in Ọkọ<sup>1</sup> Vowel Harmony System

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This paper focuses on an aspect of the phonology of Ọkọ, the language of the Ogori/Magongo people of Kogi State, Nigeria. The vowel harmony system of the language is revisited, in light of the work done by Chumbow (1982), which identifies seven vowels in Ogori, divided into two mutually exclusive harmonic sets. We have attempted, through this paper, to investigate the limits of vowel harmony spread in the language. Vowel harmony spread is usually regressive in Ọkọ; however, this is not absolutely the case, as it has been observed that the spread can also be progressive, hence it is really bidirectional. Vowel harmony processes in Ọkọ are always root-controlled, where spreading of harmony features originates from a controlling root to all bound elements in its vicinity. We also report that even though there is a strong tendency towards bidirectional spread of vowel harmony, certain bound elements, especially some suffixal morphemes do not participate in the harmony spread.

### 1. Introduction

The term vowel harmony is used to describe the restriction on a set of vowels possible within a given phonological domain, typically the word (Goldsmith 1990). In languages that have a vowel harmony system, the vowels of such languages are typically divided into two or more subsets, having the condition that all vowels in a given domain must come from one of such sets.

Greenberg (1963) and Ladefoged (1964) categorize vowel harmony systems in West African languages into ‘complete’<sup>2</sup> and ‘incomplete’ vowel harmony systems. The complete systems are generally those of languages with a phonetic inventory containing nine or ten vowels, divided into two more or less parallel mutually exclusive sets, distinguished by a phonetic feature. (1) is an example of a complete harmony set:

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<sup>1</sup> Scholars such as Chumbow (1982) use the name Ogori, which is actually the name of one of the communities in which Ọkọ is spoken. But others like Jungraithmayr (1970) and Williamson (1989) prefer Ọkọ, which is the name speakers use to refer to the language (see Adegbiya 1993, 1994 and 2001).

<sup>2</sup> In recent times, some scholars have argued that the complete and incomplete terminology is misleading. It has been discovered that in most supposedly complete set, the low vowel /a/, sometimes overlaps with both sets in some languages, e.g. Ebira. Therefore the term complete may not truly hold.

|      |   |       |       |
|------|---|-------|-------|
| 1. i | u | Set A | Set B |
| ɪ    | ʊ |       |       |
| e    | o | u     | ʊ     |
| ɛ    | ɔ | e     | ɛ     |
|      |   | o     | ɔ     |
|      |   | a     |       |

On the other hand, the incomplete system has a relatively reduced phonetic inventory of seven vowels or fewer and harmonic sets with two or more overlapping or neutral vowels that co-occur with vowels of either set. Example (2) shows an incomplete harmony system:

|    |   |       |       |
|----|---|-------|-------|
| 2. |   | Set A | Set B |
|    | i |       |       |
|    | e | u     | ʊ     |
|    | ɛ | e     | ɛ     |
|    | a | o     | ɔ     |
|    |   | a     | a     |

We note that in the incomplete harmony system, vowels /e o/ and /ɛ ɔ/ are mutually exclusive, while /i u a/ are neutral because they co-occur with vowels in both sets.

On a general note, whether in a complete or incomplete system, the choice of the distinguishing harmonic feature is language specific. For example, in some languages, the vowel harmony agreement may be marked by the feature [ $\pm$ ATR] (Advanced Tongue Root), while in some other languages, the agreement may be marked by some other feature such as backness. For example, in Turkish backness and roundedness serve as the distinguishing phonetic features (Schane 1973, Goldsmith 1990).

Ọkọ belongs to the group of languages that has an incomplete system (Chumbow 1982). It has seven phonemic oral vowels, paralleled by seven nasal vowels. This means that every oral vowel in Ọkọ has a corresponding nasal counterpart. The oral vowels are: /i e ɛ a ɔ o u/, and their nasal counterparts are: [ĩ ē ẽ ã ۆ õ ũ ].

The distinguishing phonological feature for marking vowel harmony relationship in the language is the feature [ATR]. It makes a distinction between advanced and retracted tongue root vowels. Example (3) shows how all the seven vowels of Ọkọ are classified with respect to tongue root.

|    |               |               |
|----|---------------|---------------|
| 3. | +ATR Vowels   | -ATR Vowels   |
|    | i ĩ      u ũ  |               |
|    | e ě      o ɔ̃ |               |
|    |               | ε ẽ      ɔ ɔ̃ |
|    |               | a ǣ           |

Vowels /e o/ occur in a given word to the exclusion of vowels /ε ɔ/ and vice versa.

|    |        |                 |         |              |
|----|--------|-----------------|---------|--------------|
| 4. | /e o/  |                 | /ε ɔ/   |              |
|    | ók pé  | ‘male’          | ékpɔkpɔ | ‘pepper’     |
|    | ógbě   | ‘child’         | ɛwɔtɔ̃  | ‘bee’        |
|    | ówokpe | ‘lip’           | jòrɛ    | ‘to scratch’ |
|    | bógbě  | ‘to give birth’ | fòré    | ‘to conquer’ |

Any violation of the harmony order in example (4) will only yield impermissible utterances like in example (5).

|    |         |                 |          |              |
|----|---------|-----------------|----------|--------------|
| 5. | *ókpé   | ‘male’          | *ékpɔkpɔ | ‘pepper’     |
|    | *ógbě   | ‘child’         | *ɛwɔtɔ̃  | ‘bee’        |
|    | *ówokpé | ‘lip’           | *jòrɛ    | ‘to scratch’ |
|    | *bégbě  | ‘to give birth’ | *fòré    | ‘to conquer’ |

The group of words in (5) are not well-formed because there are harmony violations, where [+ATR] vowels occur with [-ATR] vowels within a morpheme.

The vowels /i a u/ can co-occur within the same word as in the examples below:

|    |         |             |
|----|---------|-------------|
| 6. | /i a u/ |             |
|    | íwú     | ‘body’      |
|    | íhúrù   | ‘name’      |
|    | íkíbà   | ‘money’     |
|    | ilúkútú | ‘kidney’    |
|    | úkúbá   | ‘family’    |
|    | pìlà    | ‘to return’ |

They are also capable of co-occurring with any of the vowels from the mutually exclusive sets; hence, they are said to be neutral.

|    |         |            |                  |
|----|---------|------------|------------------|
| 7. | [ɔ a]   | ógá        | ‘guest/stranger’ |
|    | [e i]   | ébí        | ‘water’          |
|    | [o i]   | óbĩ        | ‘king’           |
|    | [e i]   | èkpèrì     | ‘wind’           |
|    | [ε i a] | etikpa     | ‘calf’           |
|    | [a u ε] | àbùnéné    | ‘armpit’         |
|    | [a o u] | ábáròfu    | ‘spine’          |
|    | [e u a] | ekúrákpà   | ‘maize’          |
|    | [o i ε] | òsìbìnèèjè | ‘heaven’         |

## **2. The Domain of Vowel Harmony**

Vowel harmony in Ọkọ is root-controlled, meaning that harmonic features spread from roots to bound elements which include affixes and clitics. Because the language is both prefixing and suffixing, there is always the tendency for a bidirectional spread of vowel harmony. The domain of vowel harmony in Ọkọ is therefore a root with all its bound elements.

## **3. Neutral Vowels and the Neutrality Concept**

Although we seemed to have toed the line of the tradition that classified vowels /i a u/ as neutral vowels, we quickly retrace our steps to challenge this claim. The question is, how neutral these neutral vowels are. As our data will soon reveal, the supposedly neutral vowels are usually either bound to roots which are specified for [+ATR] vowels or [-ATR] vowels. Clements (1977), notes in his treatment of Àkán vowel harmony system that in autosegmental analyses, the low vowel /a/ is considered to be lexically bound to the feature [-ATR]. We view this statement as correct as we also note that in Ọkọ, while the high vowels /i u/ are bound to the [+ATR] group, /a/ is bound to [-ATR]. Therefore, the claim that they are neutral is in question. The major point which is worthy of note with regards to neutral vowels and vowel harmony processes in Ọkọ is that, we recognize two types of harmony in the language. The first is the morpheme-internal harmony, in which the neutral vowels are perceived as being truly neutral by their ability to co-occur with any of the vowels in the mutually exclusive sets, as seen in example (7) above. The second is what we call harmony alternations, in which case the [±ATR] dichotomy comes into play. While vowels /i u/ are bound to [+ATR] roots, /a/, is always bound to [-ATR] roots.

## **4. Vowel Harmony and Leftward Spread**

In this section, we shall examine the leftward spread of vowel harmony in some aspects of the derivational morphology of Ọkọ. Areas to consider will include singular/plural distinction, agentives and Gerundives.

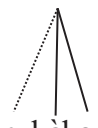
### **4.1 Leftward Spread of Vowel Harmony in Singular/Plural Distinction**

Ọkọ uses an inflection class system (Haspelmath 2002) to distinguish between the singular and plural forms of selected groups of nouns, namely human nouns, two body parts 'leg' and 'hand', the words for 'animal' and 'monkey'. It makes use of pre-root vowels in certain words to distinguish between singular and plural nouns. Each of the nouns with this distinction has either the [+ATR] /o-/ singular prefix for noun roots with [+ATR] vowels, or the [-ATR] /ɔ-/ singular prefix for noun roots with [-ATR] vowels. The plural prefix for [+ATR] roots has two alternants e~i which appear to be arbitrarily fixed, since there are no clear-cut phonological or semantic groupings that separate nouns under the /e-/ group from nouns under the /i-/ group. On the other hand, the plural prefix for [-ATR] roots is the invariable [-ATR] /ɛ-/. We may also add at this point that as a general rule in Ọkọ,

nouns can only start with vowels. There is no record of consonant-initial nouns in the language not even in loanwords.

- |    |                 |                |               |
|----|-----------------|----------------|---------------|
|    | +ATR            |                |               |
| 8. | <i>Singular</i> |                | <i>Plural</i> |
|    | ó-gbê           | ‘child’        | é-gbê         |
|    | o-fòro          | ‘man’          | i-fòro        |
|    | ò-ròkòrò        | ‘human being’  | è-ròkòrò      |
|    | ó-ró            | ‘person’       | é-ró          |
|    | ó-bĩ            | ‘king’         | í-bĩ          |
| 9. | -ATR            |                |               |
|    | <i>Singular</i> |                | <i>Plural</i> |
|    | ó-dá            | ‘younger’      | é-dá          |
|    | ó-ja            | ‘lesser chief’ | ε-ja          |
|    | ó-gá            | ‘visitor’      | é-gá          |
|    | ó-ró            | ‘friend’       | é-r ’         |
|    | o-kèka          | ‘great one’    | ε-kèka        |

In the examples (8 & 9), there is a unidirectional right to left spread of ATR harmony from roots to pre-root vowels in both the singular and plural forms of the nouns. This is illustrated in examples (10&11) where broken lines show the direction of ATR spread.

- |     |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                   |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10. | +ATR<br>Singular<br><br>ò-ròkòrò | +ATR<br>Plural<br><br>è-ròkòrò |
| 11. | -ATR<br>Singular<br><br>o-kèka   | -ATR<br>Plural<br><br>ε-kèka   |

#### 4.2 Leftward Spread of Vowel Harmony in Agentive Derivation

There are two ways of deriving agentives in Oko, the first is by prefixation while the other is by suffixation. For the group of agentives that are derived by prefixation, in which case a nominalizing pre-stem vowel is attached to a compound verb stem, the pre-stem vowel must agree in terms of ATR harmony

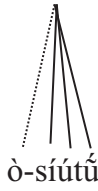
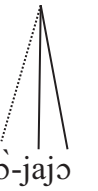


with the vowel in the first syllable of the stem. This also yields a unidirectional vowel harmony spread from right to left.

|             |   |                      |                 |                         |          |
|-------------|---|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------|
| 12.         |   | <i>Compound Verb</i> |                 | <i>Derived Agentive</i> |          |
| síé + útú   | → | síútu                | ‘to work’       | ò- síútu                | ‘worker’ |
| do work     |   |                      |                 |                         |          |
| tié + égúrù | → | tiégúrù              | ‘to sing’       | ò- tiégúrù              | ‘singer’ |
| take song   |   |                      |                 |                         |          |
| má + ɔ̀télé | → | mɔ̀ɔ̀télé            | ‘to make a pot’ | ɔ̀- mɔ̀ɔ̀télé           | ‘potter’ |
| make pot    |   |                      |                 |                         |          |
| já + ájó    | → | jájɔ                 | ‘to dance’      | ɔ̀- jájɔ                | ‘dancer’ |
| dance dance |   |                      |                 |                         |          |

The nominalizing pre-stem vowel used in the derivation of agentives by prefixation, alternates between [+ATR] /o/ and [-ATR] /ɔ/. The choice of either of the two is determined by the phonological shape of the stem vowels to which it is bound.

We show the direction of ATR vowel harmony spread using broken lines in the examples in (13) and (14).

|     |                                                                                     |   |                                                                                     |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 13. | +ATR                                                                                |   | +ATR                                                                                |
|     |  | → |  |
|     | síútu                                                                               |   | ò-síútu                                                                             |
| 14. | -ATR                                                                                |   | -ATR                                                                                |
|     |  | → |  |
|     | jájǒ                                                                                |   | ò-jájǒ                                                                              |

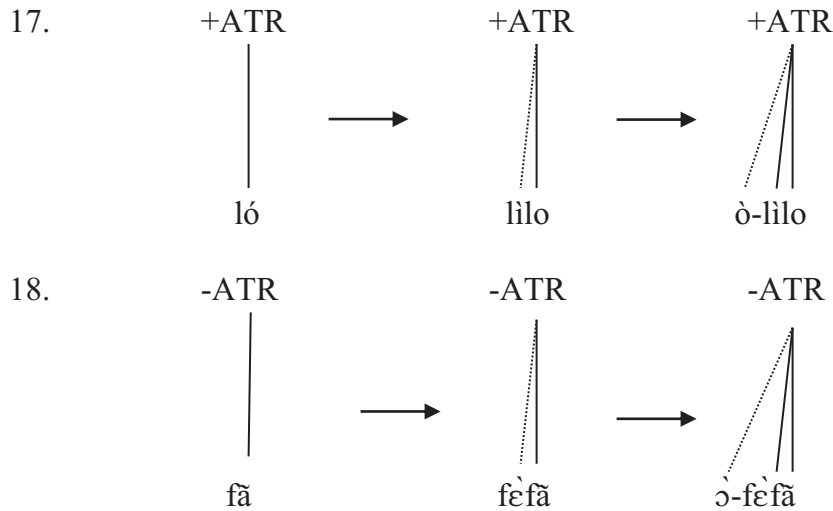
### 4.3 Leftward Spread of Vowel Harmony in Gerunds

Gerunds in Ọkọ are mainly used to modify a noun within an NP, and they are derived from verb roots. The derivation strategy for deriving gerunds in the language includes the partial reduplication of the verb root, usually an active verb, and the prefixing of a vowel to the derived stem. Also, the choice of the prefix, which alternates between [+ATR] /o/ and [-ATR] /ɔ/, is not arbitrarily fixed; rather, it agrees in ATR harmony with the vowels of the stem.

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|     |      |            |          |            |
|-----|------|------------|----------|------------|
| 15. | +ATR |            |          |            |
|     | ló   | ‘to spend’ | ò-lìlo   | ‘spending’ |
|     | dʒí  | ‘to open’  | ò-dʒídʒí | ‘opening’  |
|     | dʒé  | ‘to eat’   | ò-dʒídʒé | ‘eating’   |
|     |      |            |          |            |
| 16. | -ATR |            |          |            |
|     | fã   | ‘to boil’  | ò-fèfã   | ‘boiling’  |
|     | wá   | ‘to drink’ | ò-wèwa   | ‘drinking’ |
|     | fɛɛ  | ‘to ache’  | ò-fèfɛɛ  | ‘aching’   |

We again observe a leftward spread of ATR harmony from the verb root to the reduplicated stem and finally to the pre-stem vowel.



In examples (15) and (16), and in the illustration that follows (17&18), there are two stages of leftward spread of ATR harmony. In the first, the vowel of the verb root spreads its ATR feature to the partially reduplicated morpheme; and in the second, the spread goes as far as the pre-stem vowel.

## 5. Vowel Harmony and Bidirectional Spread

At this point, we direct our attention to investigating bidirectional spread of ATR vowel harmony in Oko. In this discussion, we shall draw data from aspects of the pronominal system of the language.

### 5.1 Bidirectional Spread of Vowel Harmony in Subject/Verb/Object Order

Table 1 gives an illustration of the pronominal system of Oko, showing only the aspects that we consider as necessary for this study.

| Person | Independent Pronoun | Bound Pronoun |              |         |
|--------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|---------|
|        |                     | Subject       |              | Object  |
|        |                     | Completive    | Incompletive |         |
| 1SG    | àmɛ                 | ì ~ ɛ̀        | mè ~ mà      | mu ~ mɔ |
| 2SG    | àwɔ                 | ù ~ ɔ̀        | wè ~ wà      | wu ~ wɔ |
| 3SG    | àjɛ                 | è ~ à         | è ~ à        | jà/ɛ    |
| 1PL    | àtɔ                 | tì ~ tè       | tè ~ tà      | tu ~ tɔ |
| 2PL    | ànɔ                 | nì ~ nè       | nè ~ nà      | nu ~ nɔ |
| 3PL    | àbɛ                 | bì ~ bè       | bè ~ bà      | ba      |

Pronominal elements, especially those which we refer to as bound pronouns depend on the verb root to which they are bound for their surface forms. Hence, for each person, there is a pair of alternating forms. The [+ATR] forms are those on the left of the ~ symbol in the table, while the [-ATR] forms are those on the right of the symbol. Both subject and object pronouns must agree in terms of ATR vowel harmony with the verb root to which they are bound. In the examples in (19-22), we present sentences that are expressed in the completive aspect using the appropriate pronominal forms.

- |                                                                            |                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>19. +ATR<br/> è - sú - mú<br/> 3SG-marry-1SG<br/> ‘S/He married me’</p> | <p>-ATR<br/> à - gbá- mó<br/> 3SG – see -1SG<br/> ‘He saw me’</p>    |
| <p>20. è – ré - wú<br/> 3SG – hurt - 2SG<br/> ‘It hurt you’</p>            | <p>bè - jèrɛ - wɔ<br/> 3PL –follow -2SG<br/> ‘They followed you’</p> |
| <p>21. ù - dī - tú<br/> 2SG –know-1PL<br/> ‘You know us’</p>               | <p>nè – gbá -tɔ̀<br/> 2PL –see- 1PL<br/> ‘You see us’</p>            |
| <p>22. è – ré - nú<br/> 3SG –hurt - 2PL<br/> ‘It hurt you’</p>             | <p>ɛ̀ –gbá -nɔ̀<br/> 1SG –see-2PL<br/> ‘I saw you’</p>               |

Due to the subject/verb/object harmony in the examples above, there is a bidirectional vowel harmony spread, shown in the illustration below.

23. (a) +ATR (b) -ATR
- é – sú- mú

à- gbá - mó

We note that where a verb root has a [+ATR] vowel specification, both the subject and object pronouns in its environment automatically take [+ATR] forms and in the case where the verb roots has a [-ATR] vowel, the subject and object pronouns take the [-ATR] forms.

## 6. Limits to Bidirectional Harmony Spread

The whole process of bidirectional spread of vowel harmony in Oko is not without its limits. The 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular/plural object pronouns do not participate in vowel harmony, even though their subject counterparts do. This and other limitations are what we shall examine in the following subsections.

### 6.1 Bidirectional Vowel Harmony Spread and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Person Object Pronouns

Chumbow (1982) also identifies the existence of bidirectional vowel harmony spread in Oko. He posits that root vowels control vowels of affixes and/or dependent clitics on both sides of the root. He supplies the following data to support his claim.

*Oko (Chumbow 1982:72)*

- |     |     |                                                       |     |                                                       |
|-----|-----|-------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 24. | (a) | à -á -bè -mó<br>He inc. beat me<br>'He is beating me' | (b) | è -é -ré -mú<br>It inc. hurt me<br>'it is hurting me' |
| 25. | (a) | *à -á -bè -mú<br>'He is beating me'                   | (b) | *è -é -ré -mó<br>'it is hurting me'                   |

The claim is that, (25) is ungrammatical because the object pronoun clitic does not harmonize with the vowel of the verb root. However, his classic piece was silent on explanations about the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular/plural object pronouns in relation to their role in left to right harmony spread.

Because this research is on-going, we do not wish to make any hasty conclusions on the evasive nature of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person object pronoun with respect to ATR harmony. However, it may suffice to succinctly state the environments in which the 3<sup>rd</sup> person object pronouns are realized. Looking back at table 1, we realize that the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular object pronoun has two forms, *ja/ε*. Both have [-ATR] vowels. The *-ja* form of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular object is realized in the following environments:

i. After high vowel:

- |     |     |                                                 |     |                                                  |
|-----|-----|-------------------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------------------|
| 26. | (a) | ì - dʒú - ja<br>1SG -close-3SG<br>'I closed it' | (b) | ù - rí - ja<br>2SG-cover-3SG<br>'You covered it' |
|-----|-----|-------------------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------------------|

---

|     |                                                        |     |                                                          |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------------------------------|
| (c) | è - sú - já<br>3SG-marry-3SG<br>'S/He married her/him' | (d) | è - ní- já<br>3SG-want-3SG<br>'S/he/it wants her/him/it' |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------------------------------|

ii. After nasal vowels:

|     |     |                                                    |     |                                                                    |
|-----|-----|----------------------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 27. | (a) | ì - ĩ - já<br>1SG-ask-3SG<br>'I asked him/her/it'  | (b) | ò - ga - ja<br>2SG-read-3SG<br>'You read it'                       |
|     | (c) | ù - fu - já<br>2SG-hit-3SG<br>'You hit him/her/it' | (d) | è - r - já<br>1SG-slaughter-3SG<br>'I slaughtered it'              |
|     | (e) | à - f - já<br>3SG-enter-3SG<br>'S/He entered it'   | (f) | è - gbe - ja<br>3SG-resemble-3SG<br>'S/He/It resembles her/him/it' |

iii. And after the open-mid front vowel /ɛ/

|     |     |                                                    |     |                                                                                 |
|-----|-----|----------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 28. | (a) | à - bè - ja<br>3SG-beat-3SG<br>'S/He beat it'      | (b) | è - jèrɛ - ja<br>1SG-follow-3SG<br>'I followed him/her/it'                      |
|     | (c) | è - wè - ja<br>1SG-give-3SG<br>'I gave him/her/it' | (d) | àme àj à - né - já<br>1SG.EMPH FOC 3SG-give-3SG<br>'I was the one who gave him' |

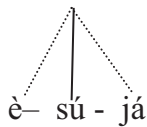
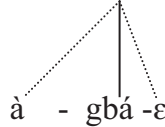
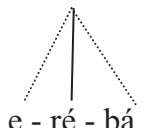
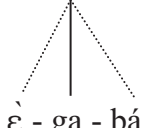
On the other hand, the -ɛ form of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person object pronoun occurs in every other environment apart from the ones listed above, namely, after [-High] and [-Nasal] vowels.

|     |     |                                                                    |     |                                                              |
|-----|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 29. | (a) | ò - gba -<br>2SG-see-3SG<br>'you saw it'                           | (b) | à - ròwá - ɛ<br>3SG-swallow-3SG<br>'S/He/It swallowed it'    |
|     | (c) | è - jiré - ɛ<br>3SG-steal-3SG<br>'S/he stole it'                   | (d) | ì - lò - ɛ<br>1SG-spend-3SG<br>'I spent it'                  |
|     | (e) | bè - fò - jɔ<br>3PL-carry-3SG go<br>'They carried him/her/it away' | (f) | à - dɔ́ - ɛ édʒí<br>3SG-price-3SG market<br>'S/He priced it' |

The 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural object pronoun has an invariable form, namely, *ba*.

- |         |                                                            |     |                                                     |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 30. (a) | è - dĩ - bà<br>3SG-know-3PL<br>'S/he knows them'           | (b) | è - ga - bá<br>1Sg-greet-3PL<br>'I greeted them'    |
| (c)     | à - jèrɛ - ba<br>3SG-follow-3PL<br>'S/He/It followed them' | (d) | ɔ̃ - gbá - bá<br>2SG-see-3PL<br>'You saw them'      |
| (e)     | è - ré - bá<br>3SG-hurt-3PL<br>'S/he hurt them'            | (f) | è - sú - bá<br>3SG-marry-3PL<br>'S/he married them' |

Because the 3<sup>rd</sup> person object pronouns do not participate in ATR harmony, a left to right or bidirectional spread of vowel harmony is blocked.

- |         |                                                                                                                                          |     |                                                                                                                                  |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 31. (a) | +ATR<br>=<br><br>è - sú - já<br>'S/he married him/her' | (b) | -ATR<br><br>à - gbá - ɛ<br>'S/he saw him/her' |
| 32. (a) | +ATR<br>=<br><br>e - ré - bá<br>'S/he hurt them'      | (b) | -ATR<br><br>è - ga - bá<br>'I greeted them'  |

Examples (31a) and (32a) show that there is disharmony between the root verbs and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person object pronouns. Although the sentences are grammatical, the roots with [+ATR] vowels do not harmonize with object pronouns. On the other hand, in examples (31b) and (32b), the bidirectional spread of vowel harmony is maintained.

## 6.2 Vowel Harmony and Word Boundary

A word boundary is capable of blocking a rightward spread of vowel harmony in Oko. This is not peculiar to Oko, as it has been noted that vowel harmony processes across languages provide additional cues for signaling word boundaries (Walker & Mintz 2006). In fact, it is believed that a listener could posit a boundary when s/he notices a disharmony in the vowels of adjacent syllables.



33.    íke # ɔkɛ̀ka    →    íken<sup>3</sup> ɔkɛ̀ka  
          village big                    ‘city/town’
- óné # ògbe    →    óné-ògbe  
          cow child                    ‘calf’
- èfè # òfu      →    èfè-òfu  
          side bone                    ‘rib’

In (33) above, the interaction is between free forms and not between word/affix conditions; therefore, vowel harmony does not apply. In other words, harmonic spread is usually interrupted at a boundary between two free forms.

34.                    -ATR                    +ATR
- 
- óné    #    ògbè

### 6.3 The Agentive Suffix

We stated in subsection 4.2 that there are two ways of deriving agentives in Ọkọ. The first we claim is by prefixation, and the other by suffixation. In this subsection, we will examine the group of agentives that are derived by suffixation, and will investigate their roles in vowel harmony spread. This type of agentive is usually derived by attaching the reduced form, -rò (óró ‘person’) to a noun root.

35.    ébé-rò (opposition-AGT)    →    ébérò            ‘An enemy/opponent’  
          íke-rò (town-AGT)            →    íkénrò           ‘An urbanite’  
          áréde-rò (marriage-AGT)    →    áréderò        ‘A married couple’  
          írómu-rò (rome-AGT)        →    írómùrò        ‘A Catholic’  
          éru-rò (bush-AGT)            →    éru-rò           ‘An uncivilized person’
36.    ólǎ-rò (patience-AGT)        →    ólǎrò           ‘A patient or quiet person’  
          éḟḟè-rò (entertainment-AGT) →    éḟḟèrò        ‘An entertainer (musician)’  
          úbá-rò (debt-AGT)            →    úbàrò           ‘A debtor’  
          ɔrɔrè-rò (fear-AGT)            →    ɔrɔrèrò        ‘A fearful person’  
          áde-rò (beer-AGT)            →    áderò           ‘A brewer/beer seller’

<sup>3</sup> Ọkọ has a nasal stop insertion process in which a latent nasal in word-final position liaises with a following oral vowel at word boundary. This process is phonetically represented by the symbol ‘ ’, between the nasal consonant and the oral vowel.

We note that the agentive suffix *-rò* has a [+ATR] vowel; therefore, each of the noun stems with [+ATR] vowels in the first set of examples (35), harmonizes with the vowel of the agentive marker with respect to [+ATR]. But a contrary condition is registered in the set in (36) where the stem vowels are [-ATR]. There is a disharmonic relationship yet there is no ungrammaticality. It becomes obvious that the suffixal morpheme *-rò* does not participate in vowel harmony spread in Oko unlike its prefix counterpart as in example (12). A left to right harmony spread from noun roots to suffixes is blocked at morpheme boundary.

Functioning as an agentive marker, the suffix, *-ro*, is also used in the derivation of ordinal numerals. Ordinal numbers are derived from cardinal numbers by attaching the suffixal morpheme, *-ro* (with or without the low tone) to a cardinal numeral stem. Only the word for ‘first’ is suppletive, derivationally independent of ‘one’. Otherwise, other numerals from ‘two’ upwards are derived from cardinal numerals.

|     |             |      |                |                     |
|-----|-------------|------|----------------|---------------------|
| 37. | òjére       | ‘1’  | òfoò-ro        | ‘1 <sup>st</sup> ’  |
|     | εóre        | ‘2’  | óóó-rò         | ‘2 <sup>nd</sup> ’  |
|     | èta         | ‘3’  | ètèta-ro       | ‘3 <sup>rd</sup> ’  |
|     | éná         | ‘4’  | ónéna-ro       | ‘4 <sup>th</sup> ’  |
|     | òpi         | ‘5’  | òpí-rò         | ‘5 <sup>th</sup> ’  |
|     | òpónòóre    | ‘6’  | òpónòóre-ro    | ‘6 <sup>th</sup> ’  |
|     | òfòmbòrè    | ‘7’  | òfòmbòrè-rò    | ‘7 <sup>th</sup> ’  |
|     | ónókónókónó | ‘8’  | ónókónókónó-ro | ‘8 <sup>th</sup> ’  |
|     | ùbòdré      | ‘9’  | ùbòdré-rò      | ‘9 <sup>th</sup> ’  |
|     | èfo         | ‘10’ | èfo-ro         | ‘10 <sup>th</sup> ’ |

From the data above, we again realize that *-ro* does not participate in a rightward harmony spread. It is also important to note that the semantic information conveyed by the suffix *-ro* in ordinal numbers is not different from what obtains in agentives. For example, a number like *òfòmbòrè-rò* ‘7<sup>th</sup>’ translates to a person or something that is positioned as the seventh.

We therefore posit that the morpheme boundary which exists between *-ro* and its host is capable of blocking a left to right harmony spread.

## 7. Conclusion

The main crux of this paper has been to examine the bidirectional spread of vowel harmony in Oko. We noted that the language is both prefixing and suffixing, hence, the strong tendency for bidirectional vowel harmony spread. We discovered that although bidirectional vowel harmony spread occurs in Oko, nevertheless, there are some limitations to this process. First, we established that at word boundary and suffixes do not participate in left to right vowel harmony spread. Secondly, while bidirectional spread is possible in both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular/plural subject and object pronouns as regulated by the verb root in

their vicinity, the same cannot be said of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun in the language. It was observed that while only the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular/plural subject pronominal clitics participate in a leftward harmony spread, its object counterpart behaves differently, thereby blocking a left to right spread of ATR vowel harmony. The 3<sup>rd</sup> person object pronouns behave more like the suffixal element, -ro, which also does not participate in ATR vowel harmony spread. We conclude by stating that regressive or right to left ATR vowel harmony is pervasive in vowel harmony processes in Ọkọ, while the progressive or left to right ATR harmony spread is more restricted, only occurring in pronominal subject and object clitics, controlled by the verb root in their vicinity.

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## **57. Honorific Distinctions as Reflexes of Deixis & Modality: Implications for Effective Communication**

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Different languages express honorific distinctions in different ways. Over the years, interest in how to enhance effective communication has been growing. The focus of this paper is to investigate and establish how honorific distinctions act as reflexes of deixis and modality and thereby contribute to effective communication.

To do this, we first examined concepts of deixis, modality and effective communication; then we established how honorific distinctions are expressed, illustrating from address forms and greetings, showing how they exhibit deictic and modal features and how they influence communication.

From the investigation, we found that Esan, our language of focus, has no grammaticalized honorific distinctions. Instead they are lexically expressed in the address and greeting forms which reveal not only deictic and modal features but highlight aspects of etiquette embedded in their culture. Finally, we note that these address and greeting forms are sometimes primarily deictic, sometimes primarily modal and at other times not separate. In such cases, they are socio-expressive.

### **1. Introduction**

This paper examines honorific distinctions as reflexes of deixis and modality in order to establish their implications for effective communication. To do this, we explain the concepts of deixis, modality and effective communication as bases of our discussion. Next, we look at honorific distinctions and how they reflect deictic and modal properties, focusing on how all these factors affect effective communication. Our data are taken mainly from the Ekpoma dialect of the Esan language, a North-Central Edoid language of the Benue-Kwa grouping (Elugbe 1980), earlier classified as Kwa under the Niger-Congo grouping (Greenberg 1963), now classified as New Benue-Congo (Bendor-Samuel 1989).

### **2. Definition of terms**

In this section, we provide a brief explanation of the terms deixis, modality and effective communication as bases of our discussion.

#### **2.1 Deixis**

The term ‘deixis’ (deictic) in linguistic theory refers to those features of language which refer directly to the personal, temporal or locational characteristics of the situation within which an utterance takes place (Crystal 1997:107). The meaning is thus relative to that situation. This means that the choice of personal pronouns (e.g. I/you), demonstrative pronouns (e.g. this/that), temporal adverbs (e.g.



now/then) and locational adverbs (e.g. here/there) determines the interpretation given to an utterance. In the literature, four sub-types of deixis can be discerned. These are spatial, temporal, person and social.

In linguistic studies, deixis handles the orientational features of language, depending on the time and place of utterance. Hence it is said to present the spatio-temporal reflexes of the typical situation of utterance (Lyons 1968:275). These orientational features are usually grammaticalized in the morpho-syntactic structure of the language though sometimes they are lexicalized. Languages may vary very much with respect to the degree to which they grammaticalize or lexicalize spatio-temporal deixis. A more elaborate definition is given by Lyons (1977:637) as 'the location and identification of persons, objects, events, processes and activities being talked about, or referred to, in relation to the spatio-temporal context created and sustained by the act of utterance and the participation in it, typically, of a single speaker and at least one addressee. Thus every linguistic utterance is typically effected in a particular place, at a particular time and by a particular person (speaker) and talks about something/someone. Saeed (2000:173-180) also discusses deixis and its sub-types viz. spatial, person, social, discourse and textual – essentially along the lines of Lyons (1977). See also Levinson (1983).

Lyons (1995:307-310) further makes two distinctions, firstly between pure and impure deixis and secondly, between primary and secondary deixis. Pure deixis are expressions whose meaning can be accounted for fully in terms of the notion of deixis while impure deixis are expressions whose meaning is partly deictic and partly non-deictic. **Examples** of pure deictics:- I/you, this/that, here/there. **Examples** of impure deictics: he/she/it for masculine/feminine/neuter respectively.

Characteristically, pure deictics refer to the locutionary agent and the addressee without conveying any additional information about them. Instead they identify the referent (an entity/a place) in relation to the location of the locutionary act and its participants. In contrast impure deictics as in the gender specific pronouns – encode the distinctions of meaning where the properties of the referent are irrelevant to the spatio-temporal location or role in the locutionary act and are therefore non-deictic. Impure deictic expressions encode and combine both deictic and non-deictic information. For instance in the noun phrase 'that man', 'that' is purely deictic though 'the man' is impurely deictic because 'man' is descriptive. Languages vary very much in the kind of non-deictic information they combine with deictic information in the meaning of particular expressions. The non-deictic part of the meaning may be descriptive or socio-expressive. In the literature, when social and expressive meaning merge or are difficult to be distinguished, the term 'socio-expressive' is used, as indeed commonly encoded in the meaning of pronouns.

For the distinction between primary and secondary deixis, primary deixis involves gestural reference as treated above, while secondary deixis involves the transfer or reinterpretation of the spatio-temporal dimensions associated with the

deictic context, such that the qualities or meaning of the primary deixis are transferred to the expression it occurs with. Hence it can be said to be characteristically metaphorical. The expression then reflects the emotion or attitude of the person speaking. For instance, if somebody points to something next to him as ‘that’ instead of ‘this’ (cf. ‘this plate stinks’ and ‘that plate stinks’), it shows his negative attitude of distancing himself and distaste. Clearly then, deixis and modality are relevant to this discussion as we see in their interaction here. However, our focus is mainly on social deixis.

### 2.1.1 Social Deixis

This involves the grammaticalization of information relating to the social identities or relationships of the participants in a speech interaction (Levinson 1983: 89; Saeed 2000:179). This phenomenon is seen clearly in some languages in their pronominal system where the contrast is commonly referred to as the T/V distinction, extensively discussed in the sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic literature of European languages like French, Spanish and German. Yoruba language, spoken in Western Nigeria also exhibits this phenomenon where the choice shows a distinction between ‘familiarity’ and ‘politeness’ in the relationship between the addresser and addressee, as seen in the table below, ‘T’ form is used for familiar participants and ‘V’ form as a sign of politeness or respect to the addressee.

|                     | T    |       | V     |                |
|---------------------|------|-------|-------|----------------|
| French              | tu   | ‘you’ | vous  | ‘you’ (plural) |
| Spanish             | tú   | ”     | usted | ”              |
| German              | du   | ”     | sie   | ”              |
| Yoruba              | ìwọ̀ | ”     | ẹ̀yín | ”              |
| Yoruba (short form) | o    | ”     | ẹ     | ”              |

Among the Yoruba people of Western Nigeria, a younger person addresses an older or socially higher person using the plural form (ẹ̀yín or ẹ). This expresses politeness and respect. In the Yoruba culture, it is taken as disrespectful and a reflection of bad upbringing to do otherwise. The singular form (ìwọ̀ or ọ) is used for younger persons, mates or contemporaries and indicates familiarity and/or intimacy. Interestingly, in referring to God, the singular form **ìwọ̀** or **ọ** is used. This does not mean that the addresser is being rude or disrespectful to God but rather indicates the intimacy and proximity/closeness of the relationship. Paradoxically, a Yoruba child dares not address his earthly father in like manner but uses the plural form. However, instead of reflecting distance or lack of intimacy, it is said to express respect and regard, being a sign of good home-training. Thus it is important for foreigners to Yoruba culture to understand these nuances, in order to avoid being inadvertently labeled as ‘disrespectful’ or ‘rude’, if they want to communicate effectively within a Yoruba situation. Clearly then,

age and social status are important in the relationship that people have, as these influence how they express themselves when interacting.

We note also that though the Yoruba pronoun *ìwò/ò* and *ẹ̀yín/ẹ̀* are purely deictic being gestural, they do have modal features, based on the nuances associated with using them, these being typical of social deixis.

South East Asia languages like Japanese, Korean and Javanese have a much richer system where social relations are grammaticalized. These expressions represent honorific distinctions because such languages use syntactic and morphological distinctions to express levels of politeness or respect, especially in relation to the compared social status of participants (Crystal 1997:186). According to Lyons (1995:309), in all languages that exhibit T/V distinction, the non-deictic meaning associated with it is perhaps primarily social. However in some languages such as Russian, the switch from T to V or vice versa, can indicate a speaker's change of mood or attitude. In such a situation, the socio-expressive meaning merge, as they become inseparable. Esan also exhibits some of these characteristics, as we shall see presently.

## 2.2 Modality

Mood and modality have been widely discussed in the literature. Some linguists treat them as the same while others treat them as distinct. Traditionally, the imperative, optative, conditional and subordinate verb forms are associated with mood while expressions indicating obligation, probability and possibility are associated with modality (Quirk & Greenbaum 1973, Quirk et al, 1980).

Bybel et al (1994:176) observed that mood and modality are not so easily defined, just as tense and aspect. This is true of Esan (see Ejele 2000/2001, 2003). However, Ejele (2005b) highlights the fact that mood and modality do not mean the same thing. Mood covers the sentence types (indicative, - statements and questions, imperative, subjunctive (conditional, counter-factuals) while modality reveals the attitude of the speaker to the situation such as obligation, necessity, uncertainty, tentativeness, disdain, dislike etc. Thus mood can be taken as the vehicle for the expression of many modalities. Sometimes they are not easily separated but they are generally not mutually exclusive. In addition, there are modalities expressed by phonological and morpho-syntactic markers, distinct from the sentence types in which they are used. It is in these cases that modality can be clearly distinguished from mood, as in the use of modal verbs like **must**, **can**, and expressions of necessity. Mood and modality both interact with tense and aspect and as such cannot always strictly be compartmentalized. (See Ejele 2005b for details). Whenever an utterance indicates the attitude or feelings of the participants in a situation, modalities are at play and this interacts with other factors involved in deixis.

## 2.3 Effective Communication

Generally, communication deals with the transmission and reception of information between a source and a receiver, using a signalling system. In

linguistics, the information is the message, the signalling system is a language. The process involves a message going from a source, the speaker, to a receiver, the hearer/listener via the medium or signalling system (Crystal 1997:72). In this process, many factors can interfere with the message. Communication is said to be effective if the information received is the same as that sent. In practice, it is not always the case.

For the purpose of this discussion, an effective communication is when the message sent out, including all contextually relevant factors in the situation as well as the attitudes and feelings of the speaker are transmitted to the hearer in such a way that the hearer's state of knowledge changes or improves. He now knows (details of) what he did not know. In an ideal communication situation, the message is perceived in the way it was intended (Hybels & Weaver 1986:20). Both deictic and modal factors actively influence the interpretation utterances are given and therefore are crucial to effective communication.

### **3. Honorific Distinctions in Esan**

Honorific distinctions can be treated as reflexes of deixis and modality, given the fact that social deixis – a sub-type of deixis, involves the grammaticalization of information that has to do with the social identity and relationships of participants in a speech situation. However in Esan, social deixis is mostly expressed lexically. Generally, it is used to express different attitudes and feelings such as familiarity or politeness, respect, disdain, impatience, tolerance, etc. Honorific distinctions can be expressed in the pronominal system of many languages as already observed, but Esan pronominal system does not exhibit the T/V distinction. However, there are two clear areas that honorific distinctions are expressed (lexically) in Esan. These are in the address forms and in greeting patterns.

#### **3.1 Address forms**

Here, we deal with how participants in a situation address each other. Esan people have a great respect and regard for (old) age and tradition. They are generally polite and this can be traced to their beliefs, world-view and upbringing and is part of their culture. Children, even in these modern times, do not call their parents by name as 'children with good manners never called their parents by name' (Okojie 1960:130). Different address forms exist, ranging from the general to more specific relationships, as treated below:

- a) **General:** elders to youths (vice-versa), men to women (vice versa) wôwó 'please'/'I beg' (cf. gui 'beg').

Anybody (old or young, male or female) can say 'please' to anybody (old/young, male/female). Hence, there is no age or sex or any other social barrier to expressing, this form of etiquette. It is a sign of politeness. 'wôwó' in Esan means 'please' or 'I beg', which interestingly in English are distinct. This creates problems of communication as it gives the impression that the Esan speaker is

always begging, whereas in actual fact, he is only being polite. There is a different word-a verb **gui** meaning ‘beg’, so there is a clear difference between ‘being polite’ and ‘begging’. This is similar to what obtains in Yoruba where *jọ/ẹjọ* (sing.)/(plural) ‘please/beg’ is different from *bẹ(bẹ)* ‘beg’. In Nigeria, it is taken as politeness, not begging. These features are basically non-deictic and modal.

b) **Children to parents:-**

àbá ‘father’ nènéné (ìnèné) ‘mother’

Modern children use *daddy* and *mummy* for ‘father’ and ‘mother’ respectively.

c) **Others to somebody’s parents**

àbáèhì (àbèhì) ‘Ehi’s father’

nènéné èhì (nènéhì) ‘Ehi’s mother’

Parents are called by their children’s names. Such terms in context are purely deictic, since they are indexical. They are also modal because they show respect and are stylistically effective in communication in the Esan culture.

d) **Husband addressing wife**

There are about six ways husbands address their wives:

- i) by her children’s name(s) e.g. nènénéhì ‘ehi’s mother’  
If she has many children, she is usually called by the first child’s name.
- ii) In a polygamous set up, if she is the youngest or the last wife, she is called óbhióhà (óbhiáhà).  
In a monogamous set up, she is still called óbhiáhà.
- iii) she is called ònòkhúó literally ‘the woman’.
- iv) by her name (full or short form) e.g. Énìvié/Ìvié/Ìv.
- v) through endearments and pet names.
- vi) mummy (with modern middle-aged couples, this starts with the children, and the husband follows suit, calling his wife ‘mummy’).

Where the names are specific and indexical, they are deictic. However, the choice made has modal implications since it shows the husband’s attitude to his wife.

e) **Wife addressing husband**

In the Esan tradition, a wife does not call her husband by name, even if he is standing next to her (though modern educated wives do). If he is far from her, it is unthinkable for her to shout his name. Instead she will walk up to him and speak to him. This is similar to what obtains in Yoruba and Bini cultures too, as indeed in many Nigerian cultures. There are about three ways a wife can address the husband.

- 
- i)    ọ̀nọ̀yánmẹ̀n    literally ‘the one who owns me’  
       (cf. **Yoruba**    ọ̀lọ̀wóòrímí    literally ‘the owner of the money for my head’  
       **Bini**    nọ̀yánvbẹ̀n    ‘the one who owns we’  
       **Pidgin**    ọ̀gá    ‘master’

These terms have non-deictic references and are still being used in traditional circles in these cultures. These expressions show clearly the respect, awe and regard that such wives hold for their husbands. To the modern educated women, these expressions are not used, as they show the relationship between husband and wife as one of ‘owner’ and ‘property owned’. While they respect their husbands, they do not like being addressed as ‘properties’.

- ii)    using his name (full or short) e.g. Ogbeide/Ogbe  
 iii)    using endearments or pet names  
 iv)    daddy (with modern-aged couples, this starts with the children calling their father ‘daddy’, their mother follows suit and calls her husband ‘daddy’).

While they may be deictic or indexical when contextualized, the different shades of modalities expressed in these greeting forms illustrating non-deixis are more important for effective communication. A person coming from a different culture and interacting with, say, Esan families, will need to have an understanding of these cultural underpinnings expressed in these address forms if he is to interact and communicate effectively with Esans. In terms of function, these address forms are socio-expressive more than deictic.

**f)    Friend to friend**

Friends affectionately address themselves as ‘omoe’ meaning ‘friend’. While an older person can call a younger one so, the young one does not address an older person as ọ̀mọ̀e. In such a situation, the older person’s attitude is one of trying to be friendly/close/intimate with the younger person. A young person who tries to do this to an older person with whom he is familiar, is seen as being not only rude, impertinent and showing lack of good up-bringing, but also confirms the adage that familiarity breeds contempt.

**g)    Youth to elder**

- (i)    male/female youth to male elderly/old man  
       èdìọ̀nmán    ‘elder’  
       ọ̀wánlẹ̀    ‘elder’  
 (ii)    male/female youth to female elderly/old woman  
       ọ̀dèdẹ̀    ‘elder’

It is considered polite to modify or qualify expression with these address forms.



- 
- h) **Male/female elder to youth**  
 òkó 'addressing a young man'  
 òmâmèn 'addressing a young girl'
- i) **Elder female to young male/female**  
 èdìònmán 'to a boy or young man'  
 òdèdè 'to a girl/younger woman'

This is only in a situation where the boy/young man and girl/younger woman are her husband's siblings or relatives.

In all the address forms, the deictic function stands out clearly when used gesturally but the modal function sometimes is the primary focus for effective communication. This is seen for example in the case where an older woman addresses her younger in-laws as if they were older than her. It is taken as a sign of humility and respect for the husband's family.

### 3.2 Greetings

Esan has different forms of greetings, some are general while others are specifically time-bound. Yet others are general in the sense that anybody can use it for anybody. The greetings for time of day are determined by the sex of who is greeting as well as the sex of who is being greeted. Hence greeting can be said to be gender-sensitive in Esan – as amply shown below. Usually, juniors greet seniors first. These greetings reflect politeness, respect, decency and good upbringing. Age and tradition are highly respected among the Esans.

General greetings like **òbókhiàn** 'welcome' **òbílù** 'thanks/thank you' can be said by anybody to anybody irrespective of age and sex. However it is a sign of good upbringing if a younger person uses 'òwánlè'/èdìònmán' (for men) or òdèdè (for women) with these greetings. General greetings such as **ḡoo** as in **bhá dòò** 'greetings to you(pl.)' and **bò díà yẹ** 'how are you' must be qualified or modified by òwánlè/èdìònmán/òdèdè if a young person is greeting an older person – otherwise the young person is seen as impolite or rude or disrespectful. Other greetings are:

a) **boys/young men to elders (male/female)**

- (1) **khàrà** 'greetings!' (khàrà òwánlè/khàrà òdèdè)  
 This is said anytime of the day, especially after meals or after receiving a gift.
- (2) **Áèsàn** 'greetings!' (Áèsàn òwánlè/Áèsàn òdèdè)  
 This expression is used in the morning/afternoon.
- (3) **òwánlè, bò díà yẹ** 'elder, how are you?'  
 This is used anytime of the day to an elderly male.

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- (4) òdèdè, bò díà yé 'elder, how are you?'  
This is used anytime of the day to an elderly female.
- (5) ò kín èwíè literally until 'tomorrow' ≡ 'goodnight' (òwánlè, ò kín èwíè)
- b) **girls/young women to elders (male/female)**
- (1) dó èjìé 'greetings!' (dó èjìè òwánlè/dó èjìè òdèdè)  
This is used in the morning/afternoon
- (2) Áìjèsàn 'greetings!' (áìjèsàn òwánlè/áìjèsàn òdèdè)  
This is said in the evening of the day, and after meals or after being given a gift from the elder.
- c) **Elders (male/female) to younger persons**
- (1) doo 'greetings!' as in òkó, dòò 'young man, greetings!'  
ómâmèn, dòò 'young lady, greetings!'
- (2) òkó, bò díà yé? 'young man, how are you?'  
ómâmèn, bò díà yé 'young lady, how are you?'
- (3) ò kín èwíè 'goodnight' as in oko, ò kín èwíè/ómêmèn ò kín èwíè.  
'òkó/ómâmèn' can precede or follow the greeting.
- (4) wè bhúélè literally 'you sleep?' meaning 'how are you'

This is said usually in the morning to a young person who forgets to greet the older person first. This question serves as a reminder to the youth and gives him/her a chance to correct himself/herself by quickly greeting *khàrà/àèsàn* (from a boy to an elderly man/woman) or *dóèjìé* (from a girl to elderly man/woman).

Sometimes, greetings showing honorific distinctions such as ancestry/descent/lineage are used to address people from royal or renowned families. According to Okojie (1954:133), most of such greetings were brought down from Benin City where historically, the Esans migrated to their present site. These greetings indicate the different quarters of Benin from where they hailed. Examples are *lámògún*, *lájèsàn*. In fact, present day Benin has a rich system of greetings along these lines.

Finally, we note that in greetings, the greeting forms or expressions such as *Áèsàn/dóèjìé/Áìjèsàn/ò kín èwíè* when used alone, are primarily deictic since they give us the temporal deictic information whether it is morning/evening/night. However the system of rules that govern their usage, also reflect the modalities involved. We see this clearly in the etiquette that reveals the beliefs and tradition of the Esan people. Whenever greetings are used with address forms, deictic and modal information are given; they are difficult to separate and are therefore socio-expressive. This is typical of social deixis.

#### 4. Highlights and Conclusion

- 1) Esan has no grammaticalized honorific distinctions. Instead, the concept is expressed lexically.
- 2) Honorific forms are expressed in the address and greeting forms which show deictic and modal features.
- 3) Some of the address and greeting forms are gender and age sensitive.
- 4) Some honorifics are purely deictic (as in temporal deictics in greetings), others are more modal than deictic as in those cases where the modal information supercedes and influences effective communication. For instance, when the attitude (of rudeness/politeness) exhibited, stands out more than the greeting itself, when one fails to observe the rules governing the use of address and greetings. Sometimes it is just not possible to separate the deictic and modal features as in the greeting and address forms used together. In such cases, it is socio-expressive.
- 5) The address and greeting forms reveal aspects of etiquette embedded in the culture of the Esan people.

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## 58. Elements of Kalabari-Ijo Syntax

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### 0 Introduction

The people and the language are called Kalabari and live in the Niger Delta Area of Southern Nigeria. Kalabari belong to the KOIN group of East Ijo in the Ijoid subgroup of Niger-Congo. The language clusters that constitute Ijo have SOV syntactic structure. In addition, by prosodic structure, these related languages are on a cline, from a typical tone language to a typical pitch accent language (Williamson 1988, Efere 1993, Harry 1998). Prosodically, a general consensus seems to exist among scholars of Ijo linguistics that like most African languages, Ijo languages adopt the universal left-to-right association of tones to bearers. This is the case in most Ijo languages. However, Harry (1998, 2004) has demonstrated that Kalabari is unique among the Ijo languages. Unlike its Ijo counterparts, Kalabari has been shown to map tones to bearers in a right-to-left fashion. Also, Kalabari is a language with little or no morphology. Most of the reflexes of the morphology are transferred to tonal configurations of syntactic elements. The importance of tone in the syntax of Kalabari is well documented in Harry (2004).

Geographically, Kalabari communities in the Niger Delta are relatively isolated communities. Contact between these communities is mainly by water transportation. But most recently, the Rivers State government has made possible in-land transportation between some of the communities.

The Kalabaris played a very significant role during the slave trade with the Dutch. Before Dutch, Kalabari had been in contact with the Portuguese. Portuguese retentions in Kalabari lexicon can be found in words referring to sea faring, clothes and some food types. In the historiography of European contacts with the Kalabaris, the Dutch, after the Portuguese became a major slave trading partner with the Kalabaris. Unfortunately, no record of Dutch retention can be found in the language, culture, etc. We are not sure why this situation. According to Waibinte Wariboko (p.c.), lack of information is compounded by the fact that Dutch documents within that period were destroyed or lost so there was no way to know why Dutch items are not found in Kalabari. Although, the impact of Dutch contact with Kalabari on the homeland cannot be adequately understood, however, strong external evidence is found in the form of the now nearly extinct Berbice Dutch Creole, spoken in Guyana, South America. As Smith et al. (1987) and Kowenberg (1990) clearly demonstrate the bulk of slaves from East-Ijo were transported to the then Dutch colony. The result of the removal and contact with the Dutch on Berbice led to the development of the Berbice Dutch Creole. Lexical analysis carried out by Smith et al. put the Kalabari as the major substrate contributor to the grammar of this Creole. But tonal studies carried out by



Devonish and Harry (in progress) suggests that Okrika, one of the KOIN neighbours of Kalabari may be the dominant force. The third set of Europeans, the English also involved in the slave trade with the Kalabaris, but reverted to the palm-oil trade after the abolition of the slave trade. Much retention from English can be found in the language. In addition, the English lexifier Creole/Pidgin called Nigerian Pidgin spoken in Rivers State of Nigeria has Kalabari as one of its major substrates.

Kalabari is a tone language with two level tones, High and Low tones. In addition, downstepped-high tone is used contrastively. In this study, the low tone will be left unmarked. Further, Kalabari has vowel distinctions based on ATR-harmony. [+ATR] vowels will be left unmarked, while [-ATR] vowels will be marked with a subdot, in order to maintain this distinction. There are two implosives with corresponding plosives in the consonant system. These consonants are bilabial and alveolar. The implosives will be marked with a subdot, while the plosive counterparts will be unmarked.

## 1. Unmarked Verbs

### 1.1 *Stative verbs with non-past reference*

- (1a)      aṛi      o      nīmī-m̃<sup>1</sup>  
              I      him      know-FACT  
              ‘I know him’
- (1b)      aṛi      o      nīmī-ṛi  
              I      him      know –CON  
              ‘I am (getting to) knowing him’
- (1c)      aṛi      o      nīmī-ḃa  
              I      him      know-FUT  
              ‘I will know him’
- (1d)      aṛi      o      nimi      wẹṛaṛi  
              I      him      know      Aux  
              ‘I already know him’

Stative verbs are verbs which denote a state. Unlike Nigerian Pidgin (NP), Stative<sup>2</sup> verbs with non-past reference in Kalabari always require modifiers such as tense, aspect, and auxiliaries to denote different states in the present or future

<sup>1</sup> The factative and past markers –m̃ are grouped together as factative tense marker by Jenewari (1977: 414). In this study, I will separate them in order to simplify the analysis.

<sup>2</sup> Items which are traditionally glossed as adjectives in other languages are stative verbs in this language (see Huddleston: 1988: 39). Adjectives as a syntactic class are almost extinct in Kalabari (see Jenewari 1977, 1980 for contrary view). Most adjectival notions as we shall see in the study are expressed by a variety of syntactic processes.

time reference. Although stative verbs have modifiers denoting different stages of non-past reference, contextual cues may be employed sometimes for further semantic elaboration. However, they are not obligatory in Kalabari.

1.2 *Stative<sup>3</sup> verbs with past reference*

- (2a) (Bìḗṇ) arì ọ kpulọ-má-m̄  
Yesterday I him short -to-INF-Past  
'Yesterday, I made him short'

- (2b) arì ọ kpulọ-ma -tẹ̄  
I him short -to-INF-+C  
'I have/had made him short'

The use of tense or aspect markers mark past reference. An optional adverbial can be used as an additional contextual cue.

1.3 *Non-stative verbs with non-past reference*

- (3a) (mókū) a nama pẹi - arì  
now I meat eat -CON  
'Now, I (am) eating meat.'

- (3b) a buru fì- arì  
I yam eat-CON.  
'I (am) eating yam.'

- (3c) a minji bú- arì  
I water drink-CON  
'I (am) drinking water'

- (3d) a fùlọ sin- arì  
I soup drink-CON.  
'I (am) drinking soup'

- (3e) a fùlọ sín- ọ  
I soup drink-FUT  
'I will drink soup'

Like in NP, contextual cues may be employed to mark non-past references. Unlike NP, non-stative verbs are usually marked for tense in Kalabari. In addition, unlike NP, non-stative verbs in Kalabari must agree with their preceding noun-Objects. As can be seen in (3a), a noun-Object which is [+ animate] can

<sup>3</sup> Stative verbs whose equivalent forms are adjectives in other languages require the Infinitive marker - **ma** followed by the past tense marker. But this is not the case with basic stative verbs.

only take the verb **pe̤i**. On the other hand, in (3b), a noun-Object which is [-animate] takes the verb **fi**. Similarly, agreement exists in the verbs which must follow types of liquids. Where the liquid is water, liquor, soda, the required verb is **bu**, (3c). But where, the liquid is water plus additional ingredient, cooked or uncooked, it must compulsorily take the verb **sin**, as in (3d) and (3e).

#### 1.4 Non-stative verbs with past reference

- (4a)        a        nama    pe̤i-m̃  
               I        meat    eat –PAST  
               ‘I ate meat’

- (4b)        Bi̤e̤n,        a    nama        pe̤i-m̃  
               Yesterday    I    meat        eat-PAST

Non-stative verbs require the past tense marker. As (4b) shows, an adverbial may be used as an additional contextual cue.

## 2. Anterio Tense/Sequentiality

#### 2.1 Stative verbs with past reference

- (5a)        Bi̤e̤n,        anie    ari̤        o        nimi    yéē  
               Yesterday    that    I        him    know EMPH  
               ‘(it was) Yesterday that I knew him’
- (5b)        ari̤        o        nimí-té̤        ala-té̤  
               I        him    know-+C        long-+C  
               ‘I knew him a long time ago’

The anterior expression with past time reference requires contextual cues, an adverbial plus the emphasis marker **–yéē**, (5a). Further, the marker **-m̃** is required followed by a contextual cue in the inform of an adverbial clause.

#### 2.2 Non-stative verbs with (past-before-) reference

- (6a)        a        wá̤rī    mé̤        lá        sákī    o        so-    tē̤  
               I        house    the        reach    time    he        go-    +C  
               ‘(By) the time I arrived (at) the house he had gone’
- (6b)        Bi̤e̤n        a        wá̤rī    mé̤        lá        sákī    o        so-    tē̤  
               Yesterday    I        house    the        reach    time    he        go-    +C  
               ‘Yesterday, when I arrived home, he had gone’

The auxiliary **sákī** and the completive aspect marker **tē̤** signal the pluperfect in Kalabari. The auxiliary following the verb **lá̤** is part of the first clause, while second verb **só** and the following marker **tē̤** constitute part of the second clause. The pluperfect construction may optionally take contextual cues for semantic

elaboration, as well, (6b). Unlike NP, where the completive aspect markers may be optional (Faraclas, this volume), In Kalaḅari, the markers are obligatory. The contextual cues and adverbials employed are for semantic elaboration only.

### 2.3 *Anterior = counterfactual*

- (7a)      ari      ogumaḅiri      mú      ḅẹḅẹẹ      a      garí      fẹ-ḅa  
              I      market      go      if      I      gari      buy-FUT  
              ‘If I go to (the) market, I will buy gari’
- (7b)      a      wẹní      ogumaḅiri      mẹ      mú      kúma      a      garí      mẹ      fẹ-tẹ̃  
              I      if      market      the go if      I      gari      the      buy-+C  
              ‘If I had gone to the market, I would have bought the gari’
- (7c)      ímgbē      ari      ogumaḅiri      mẹ      mú      kúma      a      garí      mẹ      fẹ-tẹ̃  
              If      I      market      the go if      I      gari      the      buy-+C  
              ‘If I had gone to the market, I would have bought the gari’

In Kalaḅari, there are three different ways to express the conditional. (7a) expresses the future conditional by using the conditional adverbial **ḅẹḅẹẹ** (Jenewari 1980: 137) which must follow the verb in the ‘if’ clause, while **ḅa**, the future, marks the ‘then’ clause. (7b) and (7c) express the past conditional. The ‘if’ clause requires two markers: in (7b), the markers **wẹní** and **kúma** signal the ‘if’ clause, while the completive aspect marker signals the ‘then’ clause while in (7c), **ímgbē** is used instead of **wẹní** in the ‘if’ clause. The use of **ímgbē** in this clause signals regret on the part of the speaker. Both structures require the postposed determiner **mẹ** to further indicate this type of conditional.

### 2.4 *Anterior with an adjectival verb*

In Kalaḅari, adjectival verbs are included within the class of stative verbs. Although the term ‘adjectival verb’ had earlier by used by Jenewari (1977, 1980) for Kalaḅari, Harry (1998), based on syntactic criteria classed them as part of stative verbs. As Faraclas (this volume) rightly expresses, this class of verbs ‘take the full range of auxiliaries that normally occur with other verbs in the language.’ In the case of Kalaḅari, this class of verbs take the full range of modifiers associated with stative verbs. Given that they are stative verbs in Kalaḅari, the discussion of stative verbs already presented in §2.1 applies here, as well.

### 2.5 *Anterior with locative*

- (8a)      a      mí      ángaá      simé-m̃  
              I      this      L      stay –PAST  
              ‘I was here’      OR      ‘I stayed here’
- (8b)      (Bịẹ̃n)      a      waṛí-bíó      simé-m̃  
              Yesterday      I      house-in      stay-PAST  
              ‘(Yesterday) I stayed home’

- 
- (8c) a      warí-ḥíó      simé      símé-m̃  
          I      house-in      stay      stay-Past  
          ‘I used to stay home’

The past marker **m̃** is used to express the anterior locative. Also, as (8b) shows, an optional use of adverbial can provide semantic elaboration of the structure. To express a distant anterior, the verb is reduplicated followed by the past marker **m̃**. In (8c), the condition was true in the distant past relative to the moment of speaking.

### 3. Progressive Aspect

#### 3.1 *Indicating the incomplete aspect*

- (9) a      ḥuru      fí-ári  
       I      yam      eat-+CON  
       ‘I am eating yam’

The marker **ári** signals the incompletive aspect in Kalaḥari. Unlike NP, the verb must be followed by continuative marker to express the incompletive aspect. Like NP, Kalaḥari employs adverbials and contextual cues for semantic elaboration only. However, the use of adverbials and contextual cues in such cases is optional.

#### 3.2 *Progressive to indicate the future*

- (10a) a      ḥuru      fí-ḥa  
          I      yam      eat-FUT  
          ‘I will eat yam’      OR      ‘I will be eating yam’

- (10b) Bāā              a      ḥuru      fí-ḥa  
       Tomorrow      I      yam      eat-FUT  
       ‘Tomorrow, I will eat yam’ OR ‘Tomorrow, I will be eating yam’

In (10a) and (10b), the obligatory marker for the future is **ḥa**. But, optionally, adverbials (10b) and contextual cues, in addition to the future marker, are used to mark the progressive indicating the future.

#### 3.3 *Anterior plus incompletive*

- (11a) a      ḥo      sákí      ori      etelāā      tíi-ári  
          I      come      time      he      road      play-CON  
          ‘When I arrived, he was playing on the road’      OR  
          ‘By the time I arrived, he was playing on the road’

- (11b) a      ḥo      láā      sákí      o      yé      fí-ári  
          I      come      reach      time      he      thing      eat-CON  
          ‘When I arrived, he was eating’

In the anterior clause, the auxiliary **sákí** is obligatory and always follows the verb. However, the verb **láā**, which acts as an emphasiser (having reached), can be inserted between the main verb and the auxiliary. In the second clause, the continuative marker obligatory follows the verb.

### 3.3 Incomplete with stative verb=inchoative

- (12) a      gele-áři  
          I      tall-CON  
          ‘I am getting tall’

As stated in §2.4, adjectival verbs in NP and other languages belong to the class of stative verbs in Kalaḃari. To express the inchoative, the incomplete aspect marker **ari** obligatory follows the stative verb.

## 4. Habitual Aspect

### 4.1 Zero marker for the habitual aspect

The habitual aspect cannot be expressed by zero marking in Kalaḃari.

### 4.2 Progressive marker for the habitual aspect

- (13a) aři      inji      dęři-áři      (ogumabiri      bio)  
          I      fish      sell-CON      market      in  
          ‘I sell fish (in the market)’
- (13b) aři      o      nimi-áři  
          I      know      him-CON
- (13c) aři      o      nimí-m̄  
          I      him      know-FACT

The progressive marker for habitual action or durative state is the CON **áři**. The factative marker **m̄** can also be used with stative verbs only to express a habitual state, (13c).

### 4.3 Marker of the habitual aspect only

- (14a) a      kọřinamá      kọří-áři      (sákí mámgba)  
          I      work(N)      work-CON      (time all)  
          ‘I am working (all the time)’
- (14b) iní      ẹkụen-má-áři  
          they      talk-REC-CON



In Kalabari, the sole habitual aspect marker is **ári**. In addition, as seen (13), the habitual notion can be emphasised by the use of an optional adverbial phrase or reciprocal marker **má**.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4.4 Anterior plus habitual

- (15a) a mangi mangí-m̃, ari írū wérári sakí  
 I run run-PAST I small Aux time  
 'I used to run when I was young'

- (15b) a mí ángaá simé símé-m̃, a sukulu mú-ári sakí  
 I this place stay stay-Past I school go-CON time  
 'I used to live here when I was going to school'

The anterior habitual is marked by reduplicating the verb followed by the past marker **m̃**. The anterior habitual may be followed by a clause which gives the context in which the past action or state was habitual.

### 5. Completive Aspect

#### 5.1 Completive only after non-stative verb

- (16) a warí la-tẹ̣̣  
 I house reach-PERF  
 'I have arrived home'

Jenewari (1980: 132-133) notes two variants of the completive aspect marker, **tẹ** used in questions and **tẹ̣̣**, as in (16), used in affirmative sentences. The additional prosodic differences between the two variants require some comments. Such comments are beyond the scope of this work. However, they will be part of a forthcoming study of the interaction of the prosody and syntax of Kalabari.

#### 5.2 Completive with stative verb

- (17) a gele- tẹ̣̣  
 I tall-+C  
 'I am tall completely'

As in non-stative verbs, the same marker **tẹ̣̣** is used to mark completive aspect in stative (adjectival) verbs in Kalabari.

<sup>4</sup> Phonologically, there are two forms of this morpheme, **-a** and **ma**. **-a** follows items which end in oral vowels, while **-ma** occurs with items ending in nasal vowels.

## 5.3 Anterior (or other post verbal markers) plus completive aspect

- (18a) a      ḥo      sákī, o      so- tēē  
 I      come time he      go- +C  
 ‘When I came, he had gone’

- (18b) Irrealis plus completive aspect

- a      bó      ḥarí      sakí, o      sukulu      mu- tēē  
 I      come -R      time he      school      go- +C  
 ‘By the time I return, he would have gone to school’

## 6. Irrealis Mode

## 6.1 Future

- (19a) a      só-ḥa  
 I      go-FUT  
 ‘I will go’
- (19b) a      ḥo      mēnjí-ḥa  
 I      PF      walk-FUT  
 ‘I am about to go’
- (19c) a      só-ḥa- tēē  
 I      go-FUT-+C  
 ‘I want to go (immediately)’
- (19d)<sup>5</sup> a      só-ḥe      ḥi-ári  
 I      go-FUT      want-+CON  
 ‘I want to go’      OR      ‘I would like to go’

The general future marker is **ḥa**. Jenewari (1980: 137) notes that it has three additional variants, two of which have been shown, **ḥarí** (see (18) above), and **ḥe**. The use of **ḥa** in (19a) indicates certainty of the state or action to be completed in the future. In (19b), the tense verb **ḥo** is the equivalent of the NP proximal future auxiliary. Although, it is related to the verb ‘to come’ in Kalaḥari, in this context it marks a future that is about to take place in the present. (19c) is different from (19b) in that the use of the postverbal completive aspect indicates the urgency of the future action or state to be carried out. The use of **ḥe** and the postverbal continuative in (19d) indicate a conditional future or desire. This is equivalent to the use of **wan** in NP (see Faraclas, this volume).

## 6.2 Anterior plus irrealis = conditional

- (20a) a      sukúlu mu      fámā-tēē,      (ímgbē) o      dúmō wēwári  
 kúma  
 I      school go      finish+C      EMPH he      stay      SA if  
 ‘I would have completed schooling, if he was alive’

<sup>5</sup> This example is taken from Jenewari (1980:137).

- (20b) a sukúlu mu fámā-tẹẹ, (íngbē) ori émí namína  
 I school go finish-+C EMPH he stay if  
 'I would have completed schooling, if he was here/alive'

The anterior is marked by the auxiliary **fámā**<sup>6</sup> plus the completive aspect marker. The conditional nature of the sentence is here marked by the adverbial particles, **kúma** and **namína** in the following clause; **kúma** can only be used following the static auxiliary, in other cases, **namína** is used. The clause in which **kúma** or **namína** appears can optionally take a pre-nominal emphasiser, **íngbē**. This is a strategy used by speakers to reinforce the conditional nature of the first clause. The use of the pre-nominal emphasiser further expresses regret on the part of the speaker that the event was not completed. Note that where **íngbē** is used, the first clause obligatory follows the clause containing the conditional adverbial.

## 6.2 *Anterior plus irrealis = future in the past*

- (21a) a ɓuru fí-ɓẹ tòn-m̃  
 I yam eat-FUT plan-Past  
 'I planned/wanted to eat yam'
- (21b) a ɓuru fí-ɓẹ-m  
 I yam eat-FUT-FACT  
 'I was/wanted to eat yam'

The future in the past is marked in two ways. In (21a), the verb is modified by irrealis marker **ɓẹ** followed by the verb **tòn** and the past tense maker, **m̃**. (21b), the only required modifiers are the irrealis and anterior/past. Jenewari (1980: 147) is certainly right as he notes that the form in (21b) is rarely used. (21a) is used more frequently and reinforces the notion that an uncompleted action or state took place in the past.

## 6.3 *Anterior plus irrealis = future perfect*

- (22a) a nimí namína, a ɓuru mé fí- tẹẹ  
 I know EMPH I yam the eat-+C  
 'If I knew, I would have eaten the yam'
- (22b) íngbē, a sukúlu mu lámā- tẹẹ,  
 EMPH I school go reach-+C  
 'I would have done a lot of schooling'

<sup>6</sup> **Fámā** and **wérárí** are complex auxiliaries, respectively; **fámā** is derived from the verb **fa** 'finish' and the causative marker **ma** 'cause, make'. On the other hand, **wérárí** is derived from **wérí** 'keep, preserve' and the continuative aspect marker **árí** (Jenewari 1980: 151, 158).

As can be seen the structures in the future perfect are similar to those of past in the future structures. The main clause requires the adverbials to derive the future perfect. Without the adverbials, the main clause would simply express present perfect notion.

## 7. Other Combinations of Verbal Markers

### 7.1 *Irrealis plus progressive*

- (23)        a        korú-ba  
               I        wait-FUT  
               ‘I will wait’ OR    ‘I will be waiting’

The general future marker discussed in §6.1 conveys the irrealis progressive as well, (see 19a above).

### 7.2 *Anterior plus irrealis plus progressive*

- (24a)       a        páa    ɔ        warĩĩ    mú-ári  
               I        -R     his     house go-CON  
               ‘I would (still) have been going to his house.’
- (24b)       a        nimi-á    namína, a    páa    ɔ        warĩĩ    mú-ári  
               I        know-not if    I -R    his house go-CON  
               ‘If I did not know, I would have been going to his house.’

As can be seen the anterior conditional irrealis is here marked by the auxiliary **páa**<sup>7</sup> which derives from the adverb **páa** ‘still/even now’. But to reinforce this type of conditional progressive in the narrative form, a clause containing the conditional **namína** ‘if’ is required.

### 7.3 *Other auxiliary-like elements*

Other auxiliaries exist such as **sime** ‘static’, **ḍin** ‘know how’, **ḥaká** ‘excessive’ **fámā** ‘finish’ and **lámā** ‘reach’ (Jenewari 1980:154ff). Like most auxiliaries and tense verbs in the language, this class of auxiliaries are derived from their corresponding main verbs, respectively (cf. Jenewari 1977:544). In addition they always follow the main verb, and are in turn followed by tense markers in the language in syntactic structures.

## 8. Complementizers

### 8.1 *No infinitive marker*

- (25)        a        mu        ḥírí-m̄  
               I        go        bath-PAST  
               ‘I went to bathe.’

<sup>7</sup> Jenewari (1977: 538) refers to this as tense adverbial.



## 9.4 Relative clauses (relative pronoun = direct object)

- (30a) í fomu túḃọ bẹ, ọ wáńí mú-tẹẹ  
 you beat child the(male), he house go+C  
 ‘The male child whom you beat has gone home’
- (30b) í fomu túḃọ má, á wáńí mú-tẹẹ  
 you beat child the(fem), she house go+C  
 ‘The female child whom you beat has gone home’

As seen in 9.3, no marker is required in the relative clause. Similarly, no marker is required here. In both cases however, anaphoric pronouns follow the clause. Like in (29), the pronoun must agree in gender and number with relative clause. The relative clause construction discussed here is one out of two types found in Kalaḥari (see Jenewari 1977: 342-348 details).

## 9.5 Relative clauses (relative pronoun = object of adposition)

- (31) ínjinì yana-á bẹ moto mẹ, (anì) yadì bíō émī  
 engine have-N RL motor the, yard in stay  
 ‘The vehicle which has no engine is in the yard.’

The relative clause in this kind of construction requires a relative pronoun **bẹ** ‘that’. On the other hand, the pronoun is optional.

## 9.6 Relative clauses (no relative pronoun)

As illustrated in 9.3 and 9.4, relative markers are not required in relative clauses.

## 10. Negation

## 10.1 Single negation (verbal)

- (32a) Q: íyé ogumaḃiri mu-á?  
 you market go-N  
 ‘You didn’t go to the market?’  
 A: een, aṛì ogumaḃiri mu-áā  
 No, I market go-N  
 ‘No, I didn’t go to the market.’
- (32b) wáńí mú má!  
 house go N  
 ‘Do not go home.’
- (32c) ma a mu- áā  
 HL I go N  
 ‘I have not gone.’

Two negative allomorphs are used in negative constructions: **á** is used in the question constructions, while **áā** is used in affirmative constructions. Unlike other



NP substrates, the response particle is also a negative in Kalabari. In imperative constructions **má** is used. And in some constructions the highlighter **ma** is used as response particle.

## 10.2 Discontinuous double negation

Discontinuous double negation does not exist in Kalabari.

## 10.3 Negative concord

To the best of my knowledge, there is no negative concord in Kalabari.

## 11. Passive

### 11.1 Passive construction

Passive constructions do not exist in Kalabari. But as Faraclas (this volume) notes, some idiomatic expressions in NP convey meanings similar to English passives. This may also be true for some idiomatic expressions in Kalabari.

- (33)     $\text{ɓuru} \quad \text{ì} \quad \text{tarì-téḗ}$   
           yam   I    want-+C  
           ‘I am hungry.’

### 11.2 Passive equivalents

- (34a)    $\text{fié} \quad (\text{mḗ}) \quad \text{fa-téḗ}$   
           food (the) finish/lose-+C  
           ‘(The) food has finished/lost’

- (34b)    $\text{ɓuru} \quad (\text{me}) \quad \text{fìí-téḗ}$   
           yam (the) eat+H-+C  
           ‘(The) yam has been eaten’

- (34c)    $\text{íyḗ} \quad \text{érḗ} \quad \text{sìín-téḗ}$   
           you name+H-+C  
           ‘Your name has been called.’

Passive equivalents in Kalabari involve the use of the completive **téḗ** (35a). Agentless passive equivalents involve the use of an additional H-tone on the verb, (34b) and (34c). The additional H-tone produces vowel lengthening in monosyllabic verbs.

## 12. Adjectives = Verbs

### 12.1 Verbal markers with adjectival verbs.

- (35a)    $\text{arì} \quad \text{ibì-árì}$   
           I       good-+CON  
           ‘I am being good.’

- 
- (35b)    aṛi      iḃi-ba  
              I        good+FUT  
              ‘I will be good.’
- (35c)    aṛi      iḃi-m̄  
              I        good+PAST  
              ‘I was good.’
- (35d)    aṛi      iḃi-téē  
              I        good+C  
              ‘I am good, completely.’

Kalaḥari, like other East-Ijo languages have a diminished class of true adjectives. Three items are identified as true adjectives (Jenewari 1977:341). Items which are inherently adjectives in other languages are classed with verbs in this language. Such items take the same verbal markers associated with verbs. In addition, like verbs they become nouns when followed by the nominal modifier **-ḃo** ‘person’, **-apu** ‘persons’, **-ye** ‘thing’ or **-ai** ‘things’.

#### 12.2 Verbal markers with nouns

In Kalaḥari, verbal markers do not occur with nouns. All verbal markers strictly follow the verb in the constructions.

#### 12.3 Verbal markers with locatives

- (36a)    a waṛi ḃio émiĩ  
              I house L stay  
              ‘I am in the house.’
- (36b)    a waṛi ákākā émiĩ  
              I house L stay  
              ‘I am by the side of the house’

As in 12.2 above, verbal markers do not occur with locatives.

#### 12.4 Predicate clefting (adjectival verbs)

- (37)      iḃi aniē aṛi iḃi-áṛi    ye  
              good that I good-+CON EMPH  
              ‘It’s good/beautiful I am continuing to be good/beautiful.’

As explained in 12.1 above, in Kalaḥari the so called adjectival verbs are verbs and take all the necessary verb markers in the language. In the predicate cleft construction, the fronted constituent is followed by **aniē** ‘that’ and sentence final emphasiser **ye**.

12.5 *Predicate clefting (verbs)*

- (38a) mónō anīē a mónō yēē  
 sleep that I sleep EMPH  
 'It's sleep that I slept'
- (38b) sọ anīē a sọ yēē  
 cook that I cook EMPH  
 'It's cooking that I cooked'

Predicate clefting is marked by **anīē** 'that' and sentence final emphasiser **yēē**. The highlighted or fronted element is the one that precedes **anīē** in the construction.

12.6 *Comparison with 'pass'*

- (39) a mẹnjí í nẹngí-m̄  
 I walk you surpass-FACT  
 'I walk faster than you' OR 'I walk more than you do?'

The Kalabari equivalent of NP pass is **nẹngí** 'surpass'. The regular comparison obligatorily requires the factative tense marker **m̄**. Also, like verbs, **nẹngí** can take other verbal markers to indicate various types of comparison.

12.7 *Comparison as in the superstrate*

Comparative structures in Kalabari do not have any equivalents of NP superstrate forms.

13. **Copula**13.1 *Equative copula (before NP)*

- (40a) Nyemọnị anie Abonima  
 Nyemoni COP Abonnema  
 'Nyemoni is Abonnema'
- (40b) Gogó (ọwū) yétólúmáḅọ  
 Gogo COP teacher  
 'Gogo is a teacher'

Jenewari (1977:547) notes that two copulas exist in Kalabari: **anīē** as used in equative constructions (40) above and **zero**, used elsewhere. There is however an increasing use of a third copula **ọwū** in place of **anīē** and **zero**. The historical origin of this copula is not quite clear, but Jenewari (1980:98) cites Igbo as the most likely source.

13.2 *Locative copula (with expressions of place)*

- (41a) Gogó ɛ tọangá émí?  
 Gogo COP where stay?  
 'Where is Gogo?'

- (41b) Gogó wárí bíó émī  
 Gogo house L stay  
 Gogo is in the house'

The locative **bíó** and others discussed in 12.3 are the once that can be used in such constructions.

### 13.3 Copula before 'adjectives'

As stated in 21.1, there is a highly diminished class of adjectives in Kalabari. Equivalent constructions of this type in Kalabari are constructions which contain a verb without any copula. However, nominalized verbs, like nouns, can occur with either one of the three copulas noted above.

### 13.4 Highlighter with question words

- (42a) (ɔwɔ) tɔbó yé mē fī?  
 HL who thing the eat?  
 'Who ate the food?'  
 (42b) tɔbó yé mē fī mọ?  
 who thing the eat HL?  
 'Who ate the food?'

The highlighter in the question (42a) is optional, (Jenewari 1980: 98). Sometimes a sentence final highlighter **mó**<sup>8</sup> is used instead (42b).

### 13.5 Highlighter with other structures

- (43a) tɔbó yé mē fī?  
 who thing the eat?  
 'Who ate the food?'  
 (43b) (ɔwū) Boma  
 HL Boma  
 'It was Boma.'  
 (44a) Boma anīē yé mē fī yé?  
 Boma COP thing the eat HL?  
 'Was it Boma who ate the food?'  
 (44b) (ííín), Boma anīē yé mē fī yēē  
 (yes), Boma COP thing the eat HL  
 '(Yes), it was Boma who ate the food.'

<sup>8</sup> Jenewari (1980: 100) refers to this highlighter as an 'interrogative particle'.

- (45) wá wáří mú ɓarí ó  
 we house go FUT HL  
 'We will/shall go home (a reminder)'

In affirmatives, the highlighter **owu** may be used, as in (43b). In an echo question such as that in (44a), the sentence final highlighter **yé** is used. Like most final items in question constructions, the highlighter surfaces with H-tone. The H-tone marks interrogative constructions and is always realized on the final item in the sentence, except where the highlighter is **mɔ** (see (42b) above). In the affirmative construction such (44b) a lengthened version of the highlighter, **yéē**, is used. As you will observe the same tone pattern occurs with the highlighter **ówū** in the affirmative construction in (43b). This tone pattern derives from an underlying HLH, where the L is not associated with any syllable on the surface (floating). The consequence is a surface H-!H one these highlighters. The HLH melody is syntactic melody which marks such affirmative constructions. Note the highlighters **owu** and **ye** are inherently toneless. The surface tones on these highlighters are tones associated with the sentence. The use of the highlighter **o** in (45) serves to emphasise an action to be undertaken in the immediate future among the participants.<sup>9</sup>

### 13.6 Existential ('have' = 'there is')

- (46) a ma móto yana wéráří eteláā ɓūū  
 I two vehicle have AUX road L  
 'I have two vehicles on the road'

## 14. Serial Verbs

### 14.1 Directional with 'go'

- (47a) anị doki sóo<sup>10</sup>  
 it carry go-IMP  
 'Take it away.'
- (47b) anị kẹ sóo  
 it NV go-IMP  
 'Take it away.'

The verb **só** 'go' following the penultimate one indicates the motion away from the speaker. In most cases, such a construction will be accompanied by a hand

<sup>9</sup> Jenewari (1980: 100) notes that it is also 'used in a situation where the participants in the communication are somewhat intimate.'

<sup>10</sup> The constructions in 14.1 and 14.2 are imperative constructions. In Kalabari, imperative constructions are tonally marked by a boundary L-tone. This L-tone appears on the last syllable of the sentence final verb. Where the verb is monosyllabic, as in (47) and (48), the only vowel is lengthened to accommodate this L-tone (see Jenewari (1977: 492) for additional comments on this).

gesture urging the addressee to go on. The first verb in the serial construction may be replaced optionally by the neutral verbal particle **kə** (47b).

#### 14.2 Directional with ‘come’

- (48a) anɪ doki ɓoo  
 it carry come-IMP  
 ‘Bring it’ OR ‘Come with it’

- (48b) anɪ kə ɓoo  
 it NV come-IMP  
 ‘Bring it’ OR ‘Come with it’

The verb **ɓó** ‘come’ used in a serial verb construction indicates a motion towards the speaker, sometimes accompanied with a hand gesture. Like in (47b) above, **ke** can be used in place of the verb preceding **ɓó** in the construction.

#### 14.3 Serial ‘give’ meaning ‘to, for’

- (49) ɖiri mə dókɪ ɓó ɪ piɾɪ  
 book the carry come me give-IMP  
 ‘Give the book to me.’ OR ‘Bring the book to me.’

In Kalaḥari **piɾi** ‘give’ in a serial verb construction introduces the indirect object. In contrast with NP (Faraclas, this volume), such constructions in Kalaḥari require two serial verbs in addition to the verb **piɾi** ‘give’.

#### 14.4 Serial ‘say’ with meaning ‘that’

- (50a) ɔ ɓɛɛ-m̃ (mɪɲɛsɔ) ɓoo  
 he say-FACT that come  
 ‘He said that you should come.’

- (50b) ɔ ɓɛɛ-m̃ (mɪɲɛsɔ) o ɓɔɓa  
 he say-FACT that he come-FUT  
 ‘He said that he will come.’

The Kalaḥari equivalent of ‘that’ complement after verbs of communication or cognition in a serial verb construction is the optional **mɪɲɛsɔ** ‘that’. (50a) has the implied subject ‘you’ since it is an imperative construction.

#### 14.5 Serial ‘pass’ meaning ‘more than’

As discussed in 12.6 above, the Kalaḥari equivalent of the NP verb **pas** ‘to surpass’ is **nɛŋɪ**. Like in NP, this verb used in serial constructions express the comparative in Kalaḥari.



#### 14.6 *Three serial verb constructions*

Three serial verb constructions are quite common in Kalabari. The example in (49) above illustrates a case of three serial verb constructions.

#### 14.7 *Four or more serial verb constructions*

- (51a) á ɓuru sọ fí-tẹ ɓórọ páká-m̄  
 she yam cook eat-+C pass out-FACT  
 'She cooked yam and ate and went out.'
- (51b) á ɓuru sọ fí-tẹ ɓórọ páká-tẹ ɓó-m̄  
 she yam cook eat-+C pass out-+C come-FACT  
 'She cooked yam and ate and went out and returned.'

Four or more verb serial constructions are quite common in Kalabari. Such constructions are equivalent to conjoined constructions in English.

### 15. Noun Phrases

#### 15.1 *Bare nouns*

- (52) ári o fomúm̄  
 she him beat-PAST  
 'She beat him.'

The bare noun is the only noun in the phrase. In (52), **ari** is the only noun in the subject-NP, while **o** is the only noun in the object-NP.

#### 15.2 *Indefinite article*

- (53a) gbórú námá mónō-ári  
 one animal sleep+CON  
 'An animal is sleeping.'
- (53b) ja nama mónō-ári  
 some animal sleep+CON  
 'Some animals are sleeping.'

**Gbórú** 'one' marks indefinite nouns in the singular. In the plural, the indefinite nouns are marked by the morphosyntactic structure of the nouns themselves in addition to the use of **ja** in many cases. In the example in (53b), the noun is simple morphosyntactically.

#### 15.3 *Definite article*

- (54a) ójibó bé mónō-ári  
 man the (+male) sleep-+CON  
 'The man is sleeping.'

- 
- (54b) ərəḥḥó má mónō-ári  
 woman the (+female) sleep-+CON  
 ‘The woman is sleeping.’
- (54c) óḥóri ḥé mónō-ári  
 goat the (+male) sleep-+CON  
 ‘The goat is sleeping.’
- (54d) tuḥḥó mē mónō-ári  
 child the (+neuter) sleep-+CON  
 ‘The child is sleeping.’
- (55a) ójíaḥú mā mónō-ári  
 men the sleep-+CON  
 ‘The men are sleeping.’
- (55b) éréme má mónō-ári  
 women the sleep-+CON  
 ‘The women are sleeping.’

In Kalaḥari, number and gender<sup>11</sup>/animate agreement exist between nouns and definite articles in the singular definite constructions. As illustrated in (54), the definite articles following the singular nouns are determined by the gender of the nouns, respectively. However, in the plural definite constructions, gender agreement between nouns and definite article is neutralised, but number agreement is maintained, as shown in (55) above.

#### 15.4 Plural marker = ‘they’

- (56) n mónō-ári  
 they sleep-+CON  
 ‘They are sleeping.’

The use of ‘they’ in Kalaḥari marks the third person plural pronoun. It is never used as a plural marker for nouns.

#### 15.5 Personal noun plus plural marker

- (57a) Tonye áméḥ mónō-ári  
 Tonye they sleep-+CON  
 ‘Tonye and his group are sleeping.’
- (57b) óḥóri áméḥ (ma) mónō-ári  
 goat they (the) sleep-+CON  
 ‘The goats are sleeping.’

---

<sup>11</sup> Kalaḥari has a complex gender system which is well documented in Jenewari (1980: 45-47).

In Kalabari, the plural marker **áméè** is used to refer to human and non-human animate objects associated with the person or object whose name is mentioned in the construction.

### 15.6 *Demonstratives*

- (58a)    **bí ójìbò Ø mónō-áɾì**  
           this man    the sleep-+CON  
           ‘This man is sleeping.’
- (58b)    **má ẹ̀rẹ̀bò Ø mónō-áɾì**  
           this woman the sleep-+CON  
           ‘This woman is sleeping.’
- (58c)    **mí túbò Ø mónō-áɾì**  
           this child   the sleeping-+CON  
           ‘This child is sleeping.’
- (59a)    **anì ojìbò Ø mónō-áɾì**  
           that man    the sleep-+CON  
           ‘That man is sleeping.’
- (59b)    **anì ẹ̀rẹ̀bò Ø mónō-áɾì**  
           that woman   the sleep-+CON  
           ‘That woman is sleeping.’

Like in definite articles (see 15.3 above), number and gender agreement exist between proximal demonstratives and nouns which follow in singular demonstrative noun phrase constructions. However, such number and gender agreement do not exist where the demonstrative is a distal demonstrative, as shown in (59) above. In Kalabari, demonstrative constructions are inherently definite noun phrase constructions and thus require the definite articles. However, the definite article may be omitted, as shown above. In constructions where the articles are omitted, the last syllable of the noun following the demonstrative must surface with a H-tone. This H-tone is that which marks the demonstrative construction as definite (see Jenewari (1980:52) for other types of distal demonstratives).

### 15.7 *Demonstrative plus definite or plural*

- (60a)    **má óyìapù má mónō-áɾì**  
           these men the (plural) sleep-+CON  
           ‘These men are sleeping.’
- (60b)    **má éreme má mónō-áɾì**  
           these women the (plural) sleep-+CON  
           ‘These women are sleeping.’

- (60c) anì oyíápù má mónō-áři  
 those men the (plural) sleep-+CON  
 ‘Those men are sleeping.’

The plural form of the proximal demonstrative is gender neutral, like its definite article counterpart. The distal demonstrative **anì** remains the same in both singular and plural constructions. Since definiteness is a major characteristic of such constructions, the plural definite article is required.

#### 15.8 Relative clauses plus definite or plural marker

- (61) mónō-áři oyíápù má, ma n ye fĩ-a-áã  
 sleep-+CON men the (plural) HL they thing eat-+N  
 ‘The men who are sleeping have not eaten.’

The definite plural **má** is required, but there is no overt relative marker. What seems to express the relative clause in this type of construction is the nominalised verb which modifies the noun.

#### 15.9 Prenominal adjective

- (62a) gélé-té Boma b́é, o páã gélé-áři  
 tall-+C Boma the, he still tall-+CON  
 ‘The tall Boma is getting tall still.’
- (62b) gélé - áři -b́o b́é, o páã gélé fámā-áã  
 tall-+CON+NOM(sg.) the (male), he still tall finish+N  
 ‘The man who is getting tall has not finished getting tall still.’
- (62c) gélé-té -ápù mā mónō-áři  
 tall-+C+NOM(pl.) the(pl.) sleep-+CON  
 ‘The tall people are sleeping.’

As explained in 12.1 above, most adjectives in other languages are verbs in Kalabari and in related languages. The so called ‘adjectival verbs’ like regular verbs, may occur before nouns. As prenominal modifiers, verbs plus their modifiers normally precede the nouns they modify. Verbs in prenominal position can co-occur with all tense markers except the past tense or factative tense marker, **m̃**. As nouns, the verbs plus their modifiers require the nominalising suffix, **-b́o** ‘person’, **apù** ‘persons’, **-ye** ‘thing’ or **-aì** ‘things’.

#### 15.10 Postnominal adjectives

- (63) námá kálíe pẹ́lé i pĩřĩ!  
 meat small cut me give  
 ‘Cut a little piece of meat for me.’

The only postnominal modifier in Kalabari, as illustrated in (63) above, is a morphosyntactically and phonologically complex item derived from the adjective *kala* ‘small’ and the nominaliser *–ye* ‘thing’ (see Jenewari (1977: 342) for further details).

#### 15.11 Gender agreement

As explained in 15.3 above, gender agreement exists within the noun phrase in Kalabari (see Jenewari 1980 for further details).

### 16. Possession

#### 16.1 Noun plus noun constructions (possessor + possessed)

- (64) Boma wari  
Boma house  
‘Boma’s house’

In a simple possessive construction in Kalabari, the possessor precedes the possessed in the construction.

#### 16.2 Noun plus noun constructions containing adpositions

To the best of my knowledge, such constructions do not occur in Kalabari.

#### 16.3 Noun plus noun constructions containing possessive adjectives

To the best of my knowledge, such constructions do not occur in Kalabari.

#### 16.4 Possessive adjectives

Possessive adjectives are not different possessive pronouns in Kalabari. Such possessives in the language will be discussed in 16.5 below.

#### 16.5 Possessive pronouns

- (65a) i warĩ ibĩ i warĩ nengĩ-m̃  
my house good your house house surpass-FACT  
‘My house is better than your house’
- (65b) i warĩ ibĩ i nyēē nengĩ-m̃  
my house is good your own surpass-FACT  
‘My house is better than yours.’

Possessive pronouns are phonologically dependent on the nouns they modify in Kalabari. Phonologically possessive pronouns are clitic pronouns and are divided into short, V-only, as illustrated in (65) and long, VCV. The V-only pronouns co-occur with nouns which begin with consonants, while their VCV counterparts co-occur with nouns which begin with vowels. In addition, their co-occurrence with nouns are determined by vowel harmony constraints in the language (further

details are given in Jenewari (1980:90-91) and (Harry 2003:117-118) among others).

16.6 *Possessive pronouns as emphatic possessive adjectives*

Constructions of this type do not occur in Kalaḫari.

17. **Pronouns**

17.1 *Personal pronouns: first person singular*

- (66a) a (before consonant-initial items) ‘I’  
 ari (before vowel-initial items) ‘I’  
 i ~ i (before consonants) ‘me (vowel harmony constraints)’  
 iye ~ iye (before vowels) ‘me (vowel harmony constraints)’
- (66b) iyəri ‘I/me (emphatic)’

As explained in 16.5 above, possessive pronouns are phonologically dependent on items which follow in a construction. The same is true for the first person singular pronouns in (66a). In subject position, the dependent pronouns used are **a** and **ari**, while in object position, **i ~ i** and **ie ~ ie** are used. In contrast, that in (66b) is a pronoun which does not phonologically depend on items which follow in a construction. The class to which this pronoun belongs is called independent pronouns in Kalaḫari and are used for emphasis in contexts in which they occur (Jenewari 1980: 82-89).

17.2 *Personal pronouns: second person singular*

- (67a) i ~ i (preconsonantal + vowel harmony) ‘you’  
 iyé ~ iyé (prevocalic + vowel harmony) ‘you’
- (67b) iyəri ‘you (emphatic)’

Like the first person singular pronouns, the second person singular pronouns in (67a) are dependent pronouns. Here the same pronouns occur in both subject and object positions. The independent pronoun is used for emphasis in both contexts.

17.3 *Personal pronouns: third person singular*

- (68a) o ~ o (preconsonantal + vowel harmony + male) ‘he/him’  
 ori ~ ori (prevocalic + vowel harmony + male) ‘he/him’  
 á (preconsonantal + vowel harmony + female) ‘she/her’  
 ári (prevocalic + vowel harmony + female) ‘she/her’  
 ani ‘it/neuter’
- (68b) ori ‘he/him (emphatic)’  
 ári ‘she/her (emphatic)’  
 ani ‘it (emphatic)’



In the third person singular, the dependent pronouns are further distinguished by gender agreement, as shown in (68a). In (68b), the corresponding independent pronouns are used for emphasis.

17.4 *Personal pronouns: first person nonsingular*

- (69a)    wá                    ‘we’  
             wámìna            ‘us’
- (69b)    wámìni                    ‘we/us (emphatic)’

The regular subject pronoun is wa, but sometimes it is used in object positions before consonant-initial items (Jenewari 1980: 90). The emphatic pronoun in (69b) is used in all contexts. In fast speech, the object pronoun **wámìna** and the emphatic pronoun **wámìni** are phonologically reduced to **wána** and **wáni**, respectively.

17.5 *Personal pronouns: second person nonsingular*

- (70a)    ó ~ ọ (preconsonantal + vowel harmony)    ‘you (plural subject/object)’  
             ọmìni (prevocalic)                                    ‘you (plural subject)’  
             ọmìna                                                        ‘you (plural object)’
- (70b)    ọmìni                                                        ‘you (plural emphatic)’

The regular subject second person plural pronoun can be used in object positions in cases where the following item begins with a consonant. The long form is used in other object positions where the following item begins with a vowel. The independent pronoun is used in emphatic contexts.

17.6 *Personal pronouns: third person non-singular*

- (71a)    n (preconsonantal)                                    ‘they (subject)’  
             ini ~ ìni (prevocalic + vowel harmony)            ‘they (subject)’  
             ìna                                                                ‘they (object)’
- (71b)    ini                                                                ‘they (emphatic)’

The subject pronoun n can occur in object position, as well, particularly before consonantal-initial items. The emphatic pronoun occurs in both subject and object positions.

17.7 *Reflexive pronouns*

- (72a)    ari ì búṽ érí-ári  
             I    my body see-+CON  
             ‘I am seeing myself’ OR    ‘I can see myself.’

The reflexive pronoun is formed by the use of **hù** ‘body’. In a phrase final position the last vowel is lengthened to receive a boundary floating H-tone (see Harry (1998) for details of the tonology of noun phrases.

### 17.8 Interrogative pronouns and other question words

|       |          |                      |              |                                 |
|-------|----------|----------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| (73a) | tùbò     | ‘who, whom’          | tùbò mọ?     | Who (emphatic)?                 |
| (73b) | tié      | ‘what, which’        | tié mọ?      | What (emphatic) <sup>12</sup> ? |
| (73c) | tangá    | ‘where’              | tangá mọ?    | Where (emphatic)?               |
| (73d) | tọ sakí  | ‘when’               | tọ sakí mọ?  | When (emphatic)?                |
| (73e) | tie goté | ‘why’                | tie goté mọ? | ‘Why (emphatic)?                |
| (73f) | ìndéè    | ‘how, where’         | -            |                                 |
| (73g) | ìndáì    | ‘how much, how many’ | ìndáì mọo?   | ‘How much/many?                 |
| (73h) | mọ       | ‘tag (emphatic)’     |              |                                 |

The interrogative words in (73a-g) are morphosyntactically complex words. They are compounds of two or more items which have undergone phonological reduction and have become lexicalised in most cases. The emphatic tag **mọ** can immediately follow any of the question words, except (73f), to express a question by themselves. As seen elsewhere in this study this tag can also be used as a highlighter.

## 18. Coordinating Conjunctions

### 18.1 ‘and’ joining sentences

- (74a) arì ogumàbiri mú-à, íyérí wárí mú-à  
 I market go-FUT you (EMPH) house go-FUT  
 ‘I will go to the market you will go home.’
- (74b) arì ogumàbiri mú-à, íyérí só ogumàbiri mú-à  
 I market go-FUT you (EMPH) also market go-FUT  
 ‘I will go to the market (and) you will go to the market also.’

There is no overt marker conjoining two sentences. Sometimes where the verb phrases in both sentences are identical the item **só** or **píkí** ‘also’ occurs following the subject pronoun (74b). Syntactically, such an expression is acceptable but it is semantically awkward. The conjoining structure in 18.2 below better expresses (74b).

### 18.2 ‘and’ joining sentence parts

- (75a) íyérí na íyérí na ogumàbiri (mẹ) mú-à  
 you and me and market (the) go-FUT  
 ‘You and I will go to the market.’

<sup>12</sup> Used in most cases by the speaker to express annoyance towards the addressee’s persistent query.

- (75b) íyẹ́rì ná ìnì ná ogumàbìrì (mẹ́) mú-ḅa  
 you and me and market (the) go-FUT  
 ‘You and I will go to the market.’

The use of **na** is quite common in conjoining noun phrases with a common predicate.

## 19. Adpositions

### 19.1 General locative postposition

- (76b) íyẹ́rì ná ìnì ná ogumàbìrì (mẹ́) b́ió mú-ḅa  
 you and me and market (the) L go-FUT  
 ‘You and I will go inside the market.’

The general locative postposition in Kalabari is bio ‘inside’. Like other locatives, it always follows the noun being modified.

### 19.2 Zero postposition between motion verb and destination

Locative postpositions are not required in constructions of this type. It is used in specific situations for semantic elaboration by the speaker.

## 20. Miscellaneous

### 20.1 Word order: questions

- (77) (owu) í tie fí?  
 (HL) You what eat?  
 ‘What did you eat?’

Interrogative words listed in 17.8 always occupy the position of the replaceable constituent they question in the sentence. The highlighter **owu** may optionally precede the subject. There is no obligatory word inversion or modification in interrogative constructions in Kalabari.

### 20.2 Sentence final o

- (78) ma a b́ó íyẹ́ ẹ́rì-áā. ìnganì má ō  
 N I come you see+N. angry N +R  
 ‘I have not come to visit you. Do not be angry.’

### 20.3 Ideophones

- (79a) ọ gbragadaì má sém̃  
 He agile EMPH stand-FACT  
 ‘He stood with agility.’
- (79b) í Ø kẹ́mẹ́kẹ́mẹ́ ẹ́ka-m  
 you COP slow AUX-FACT  
 ‘You are very slow.’

- 
- (79b) í Ø kẹ́mẹ́kẹ́mẹ́ ẹ́áká-m  
           you COP slow AUX-FACT  
           ‘You are very slow.’

Kalaḅari uses ideophones productively. It can be used as adverb, verb or adjective. Like in Nigerian Pidgin, ideophones are also used to add drama to an expression.

### Abbreviations

|        |                           |
|--------|---------------------------|
| CON    | Continuative Aspect       |
| +C     | Completive Aspect         |
| FUT    | Future                    |
| FACT   | Factative marker          |
| +R     | Realis Auxiliary          |
| -R     | Irrealis Auxiliary        |
| To-INF | To Infinitive             |
| AUX    | Auxiliary                 |
| PAST   | Past tense                |
| EM     | Emphasiser                |
| REC    | Reciprocal                |
| PF     | Proximal Future Auxiliary |
| SA     | Static Auxiliary          |
| H      | H tone-passive marker     |
| HL     | Highlighter               |
| NV     | Neutral verb particle     |
| IMP    | H tone imperative marker  |
| NOM    | Nominaliser               |

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**T**he papers in this volume were selected from the Silver Jubilee edition of the Annual Conference of the Linguistic Association of Nigerian (LAN) which was held at the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), Abuja, Nigeria. The Silver Jubilee edition of the annual conference of LAN was dedicated to the FATHER OF NIGERIAN LINGUISTICS, Professor Emeritus Ayo Bamgbose, and the proceeds therefrom. Professor Emeritus Bamgbose was the first indigenous Professor of Linguistics in Nigeria, and the first black African to teach linguistics in any known university south of the Sahara. He was there from the very beginning, and with co-operation of the likes of the Late Professor Kay Williamson, Professor Emeritus Bamgbose nurtured Nigerian linguistics. He is not just a foremost Nigerian linguist, but also a most famous, respected, celebrated, distinguished, and cherished African linguist of all times. To be candid, Nigerian linguistics is synonymous with Professor Emeritus Bamgbose.

In 58 well-written chapters by experts in their fields, the book covers aspects of Nigerian languages, linguistics, literatures and culture. Frankly, we have not succeeded in putting the papers meticulously into their natural sections; hence, one finds some overlapping in the way the papers are arranged. It is not, however, uncommon with books of this nature.

The book is a must read for all who are interested to learn about current trends in the study of languages, linguistics and related subject-matters in Nigeria.



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